Student Support Plan

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Processing information (may need more time)

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Has to over learn in order to gain understanding, adding to workload

Spelling, grammar and punctuation

Written expression and structure of writing

Feedback Guidelines

Confidential

Name: **Mita Lad** **ID: 2249177**

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SpLD Advisor: Wendy Austin **Date: 24.3.17**

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Looking at Television: An exploration of the different ways Gujarati-speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women look at and engage with television during their daily viewings of prime-time Hindi serials.

Mita Lad
Edge Hill University

This thesis is submitted to the Department of Media, Edge Hill University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

January 2020

For Umesh, 1986 – 2009.

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Acknowledgements
Mita Lad

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Abstract

This thesis is a television audience study that will examine the complex ways viewers look at and engage with television. The research seeks to not only deepen our understanding of established characterisations of looking and engagement, but it is also concerned with how viewers can negotiate texts. Thus, the study explores other ways of looking and forms of engagement. I specifically interrogate the concept of *darshan*. A two-way ocular gesture that means to look at be looked at. It is a form of worship practiced by some forms of Hinduism. The power dynamics of *darshan* are very different from the characterisations developed in American-British scholarship. While the gaze (Mulvey, 1975) gives the power of the look to the person doing the looking; and the glance (Ellis, 1982/1992) implies power of the look is given over to the institution of television. But with *darshan*, it is the object of *darshan* that has the power and it is they that decide when to reciprocate the look.

In order to examine these concepts, I apply a mixed-methods approach to a specific audience that has been overlooked in television audience studies. Consequently, while exploring new ways of looking and forms of engagement the research also brings to the fore the viewing habits of older Gujarati-speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women, living in the north western city of Preston. I specifically focus on their daily viewings of prime-time Hindi language serials on transnational digital channels. The range of methods used, allow me to examine and analyse the factors and conditions in which television is looked at and engaged with to help understand just what kind of characterisations of looking and engagement might be more applicable to describe this audiences' experience. Factors that will be examined include, but not limited to, the text themselves, as well as physical spaces, their history with television and the use of television technology, to name but a few. The thesis finds that a fluid negotiation of text, environment, aspects of personhood and life experience feed into ways of looking and forms of engagement. The complex fluctuations can vary from moment to moment, from serial to serial but are grounded via a lens that is deeply individual personal to each participant.

Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a television audience study that will examine the complex ways viewers look at, and engage with, television. The research seeks to not only deepen our understanding of established characterisations of looking and engagement, but it is also concerned with how viewers can negotiate texts. Thus, the study seeks to identify other ways of looking and forms of engagement. In order to examine these concepts, a specific audience that has been overlooked in television audience studies will be at the centre of this thesis; older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women. Consequently, while exploring new ways of looking and forms of engagement the study will also bring to the fore the viewing habits of those women. The thesis will investigate what factors and conditions could impact on what kind of characterisations of looking and engagement can be used to describe this audiences' experience. Before I discuss the project in more detail, some context behind the importance of vision will be considered.

In North American and western European traditions sight is favoured above other senses. An early understanding of the preference for sight stems from Aristotle's classical hierarchy of the senses which places sight above all other senses. Sight is then followed by hearing, smell, taste and then touch (Jutte, 2005). 'For Aristotle, sight stands highest because of its cognitive value, and the same applies to Plato. One need only think of the famous image of the case in *The Republic*, which adumbrate the passage from an oral to a visual culture' (Jutte, 2005:64). Here Jutte highlights the foreshadowing of culture moving from aural and oral-based communities to a culture based on vision and the visual. Fluctuating changes are mapped between the senses and the increase in vision-based culture in the 18th and 19th centuries (*ibid*.).

The dominance and partiality of sight was maintained into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Margaret Olin (1991) highlights the preference for sight by early psychologists in the nineteenth century. They placed less significance on the sense of touch, and more on the sense of seeing or looking. 'The optical sense came to be regarded as the sense of the intellect, the spirit, or the imagination, leaving the tactile sense relegated to more earthbound tasks' (Olin, 1991:208). Olin's explanation of vision provides more information to the person than another sense. This mirrors assumptions made in antiquity. However, Olin fails to address two key factors, first the changes in the 20th century to visual culture; and second, Olin does not explore the intertwined nature of the senses.

Chapter 1: Introduction
Mita Lad

The mass production of media in the 20th century has increased the dominance of vision and encouraged different ways of looking. Jutte (2005:300) argues that visual culture in contemporary times 'instrumentalised the human gaze' and 'the notion that cinema and television have taught people to see 'faster' and 'more superficially'. That is to say, visual culture such as film and television, uses the look of viewers as a means to an end, mostly to present specific ideas. In reference to television Jutte (2005:303) mentions how '[s]eeing' is replaced by 'watching'. Unlike other visual media, television allows the viewer to be present at events occurring in different places'. In other words, the television has brought the viewer the ability to see an event live, as it is happening elsewhere.

There is a great deal of work that suggests there is a complex relationship between the senses that highlights how they can be interwoven. Sight and vision have not been discussed in isolation, but alongside the other senses such as hearing and touch. Jutte (2005) cites many examples from art, literature, religion and the performing arts where they were used in varying combinations. Sturken and Cartwright (2017:103) also highlight that 'when we look, we engage with other senses including hearing and touch'. That is to say that when a person looks, they do not shut down their other senses. They are also used to help the person understand what they have seen. When a film and a television programme is viewed, it is a multisensory experience. How this multisensory nature of viewing television programmes can play a role in how it may impact this audiences' ways of looking and forms of engagement is a key part of this research.

By examining different contexts through which a person looks and sees it can help to researchers to establish the impact of other senses on ways of looking and forms of engagement. John Berger establishes that 'the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe' (1972:8). Sturken and Cartwright (2017:1) expand on this idea and explain that context is key by pointing out that '[n]obody is free to look as they please, not in any context. We all perform within (and against) the convention of cultural frameworks that include nation, religion, politics, family, school, work and health'. In other words, a persons' looking practices need to be understood through the consideration of varying factors such as formations of personhood, cultural and social experiences and education, to name but a few. These factors lead to questions such as who is doing the looking? What are they looking at? Why are they looking? Where are they looking? How are they looking? These questions will be

explored in this thesis.

The eyes and the importance of the visual are also dominant features in many forms of Hinduism. It is understood that blessings between a deity and devotee are given and taken through the eyes, this exchange of looks is referred to as *darshan*.[i] *Darshan* is a Sanskrit term that means to look and be looked at. It is a two-way ocular gesture; 'when devotees look at images, they are also standing in the field of the deities' power and absorbing it like light through their own eyes' (Fuller, 2004:60). In other words, many images of Hindu deities are made with their eyes wide open and it is through these open eyes that the blessing are bestowed upon a devotee. *Darshan* can be taken from images of deities such as *murtis* (statues), printed representations and even symbolic representations (i.e. the *linga*);[ii] as well as *sants* and gurus (Eck, 1985). Hanna Klien (2013:57) highlights how 'the unblinking eyes of the deity are regarded as very powerful, due to the ever-watchful gaze which sees everything'.

The *darshan* exchange is not a passive form of looking as the deity and devotee are looking at each other. Woodman Taylor (2002:302, citing Alfred Gell, 1998) suggested that there is a mutuality to *darshan* as well as there being an active exchange. Taylor (2002:302) also explains the potential tangible element of *darshan*, mostly expressed through the terms used when referring to *darshan*, *dena* (to give) and *lena* (to take)[iii]. Taylor's assertions begin to highlight the differences between looking regimes in Anglo-European cultures and those from elsewhere. The possibility of there being another sense being invoked during *darshan* reiterates the complex nature of all the senses.

In the darshanic relation the deity chooses who to present or reveal themselves to. It is only after the revelation can the exchange between the deity and devotee take place. Eck describes how the exchange of looks is not initiated by the devotee, but instead it is the deity who presents themselves to be seen, in one way it could be described as having the ability to see the divine image – an ability or experience that is not given to everyone (Eck, 1981:6). In other words, even though everyone can seek *darshan* from a deity, it is not always given. The object of *darshan* exercises the power by allowing the devotee to see them, thus giving power to both male and female deities (normally the objects of *darshan*). In introduce the concept of *darshan* because I want to consider whether it can be given and taken through a mediated form such as television and therefore be understood as another way of looking.

1.1.1 Background to this study

Previous studies have focused on theoretical abstract characterisations of looking at and engagement with not only television but film as well. These mainly centre on the glance and the gaze. I provide a more detailed discussion of these conceptualisations in Chapter 2, but here I highlight some of the key characteristics. Laura Mulvey (1975) argued that in relation to film, the gaze gives male spectators the power to look at women who are the object of the look. Mulvey further argued, the way in which films are shot, exhibited and the direction in which spectators are seated all emphasise and encourage the male gaze. The assumed form of engagement that occurs with the gaze is one that is concentrated and fully focused on the film. In opposition to Mulvey's conceptualisation of the gaze, John Ellis (1982/1992) described looking at television as more of a glance than a gaze. This is a look that is distracted and has no power (Ellis, 1992:163). For Ellis, it is the television institution that looks on behalf of the audience. Similarly, to film, Ellis also argued that the environment in which television is being looked at and engaged with (a brightly lit, communal space) can lead to the look being more a glance towards television. Due to the distractive nature of the glance, it is assumed that viewers are only partially engaged with the television programmes. One of the aims of this thesis is to move debates away from these conceptualisations and consider d*arshan* as an alternative way of looking and form of engagement. A darshanic way of looking and form of engagement will be considered in two ways. Firstly, its presence and construction in a specific genre of television, prime time Hindi language serials. Secondly, *darshan* will be examined through the understanding the participants of this research have of the concept.

I am not the first to examine the presentation of *darshan* on either a film or television screen. An initial description and analysis of *darshan* being presented on film (*Jai Santoshi Maa*, 1975) is given by Lawrence Babb (1981). By analysing camera work and editing Babb provided an initial understanding of how *darshan* is constructed in the film. Babb explains that the construct is the directors' interpretation of what devotees believe is occurring when *darshan* is taken. Babb (1981) argued that within some Hindu traditions the look of a deity can be benevolent as well as malevolent; and devotees seek the benevolent look of the deity through *darshan*. He also argued that an intimacy is created between the devotee and the deity when *darshan* is taken.

In addition to the text-based analysis provided by Babb, there was also some insight into early audience reactions to constructions of *darshan*. Beatrix Pfleiderer (1985, citing Barnouw and

Krishnaswamy (1964)) give an early description of how Indian film audiences reacted to images of Hindu deities being presented on screen. They explain 'that in the early days of the Indian film the audience would prostrate themselves on the ground when a mythical figure, e.g. Krishna, would appear on the screen' (Pfleiderer 1985:75). This observation indicates a physical response and a willingness of the audience, to submit themselves to the image of the deity. The power dynamics and the willingness to submit to these relations, in the darshanic context, is important to this thesis, as they differ from other characterisations of looking and forms of engagement.

The key difference between these characterisations is based on power dynamics. I mentioned above that in terms of the gaze the power is on the side of the looker. The object of the look has no power or control (Mulvey, 1975). The circumstances in which films are seen in an auditorium, as well as the direction the camera is pointed, all link back to instigating the gaze from a male point of view. For Mulvey this power dynamic stemmed from the patriarchal culture and society of real life. The glance, according to John Ellis (1982/1992:163) is a quick and distracted way of looking that has no power. The power in this conceptualisation is handed over to the camera, which stands as a representation of the television institution. In other words, the television channel has been given the power of the look on behalf of the viewer. In the darshanic relation it is the object of *darshan* that has all the power. As I stated above, it is the object of *darshan* that decides when to present and reveal itself to the looker; and it is from having this control that the object has the power of the look. The darshanic power relationship is immensely different from the established descriptions of the gaze and the glance. Over the last three decades, at least, if not longer, *darshan* has been appropriated by the right-wing Hindu nationalist political agenda. The organisations and parties connected to the Hindutva movement use the same structures of *darshan* in their propaganda to instigate the same power dynamic. This means, audiences are encouraged to submit themselves (like they do when they see a deity in the *darshan* relation) to the Hindutva agenda and the leaders of the right-wing Hindu nationalist organisations and political parties; thus, empowering such as the BJP.

1.1.2 Politics in India

A part of this study centres on the current political situation in India. What follows in this section is some context to government politics in India, but it is not a thorough or a detailed history. Rather it is a broad overview of the party currently in power and their affiliations.[iv]

India is being governed by a coalition of centre right parties that are referred to as the National Democratic Alliance. The main party within the coalition, and a key player in the formation of the alliance in 1998, is the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (abbreviated to the BJP, India's People Party). It is the leader of the BJP who is also the prime minister of India, Narendra Modi. The National Democratic Alliance have been in power since the 2014 election, which echoed the global turn towards right-wing politics.[v]

The BJP have close connections to various other organisations associated with the far-right Hindu nationalist agenda (Rajagopal, 2001; Bhatt and Mukta, 2000). These organisations are collectively referred to as the *Sangh Parivar* or the Family of the RSS. RSS is an abbreviation of *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (National Volunteer Organisation) and was founded in 1925. It was established principally to champion the formation of a Hindu nation. Numerous branches of the RSS can be found throughout India.[vi] Not only is it a volunteer group but it is also considered to be a paramilitary organisation as well (Rajagopal, 2001). Within the *Sangh Parivar* there are numerous organisations that are a part of Indian Hindus everyday life, such as trade unions, student bodies, charities, schools and colleges. Other than the BJP which is the political wing of the family there is also the *Vishva Hindu Parischad* (abbreviated to VHP, World Hindu Council). 'The VHP was formed… to bring together and unite the numerous Hindu religious leaderships and sectarian communities' (Bhatt and Mukta, 2000:420-421). In other words, the council was made up of the leaders of the numerous sects within all forms of Hinduism.

Recently there has been one message that is being promoted in India which is grounded on a very specific and inflexible understanding of Hinduism. Banaji (2018:334) argues that '[t]he current ruling narrative in India posits a narrow and rigid version of Hinduism as fundamental to Indianness... The popularisation of this repressive, high caste, vegetarian and chauvinist version of Hinduism is a relatively recent phenomenon—having been propagated in the 1920s by the far-right ideologue Savarkar and spread since the 1990s'. In other words, that in order to be considered Indian, a strict form of Hinduism, that is hierarchical in terms of caste and gender needs to be followed. No other form of Hinduism is considered and is oppressed as are any other cultures and communities that does not fit into ideal. All these aspects are assumed key factors of identity of what it is to be Indian. Persuading and promoting the strict formation of Hinduism can be seen in the implementation of numerous policies. An example of one such policy is the rewriting of history texts books for schools. The textbooks now frame Indian

history to be presented through a north Indian Hindu lens (Banaji, 2018). More, recent developments in policy further emphasise the Hindu nationalist agenda, for example in August 2019 the Indian government revoked the Special Status of the troubled region of Jammu and Kashmir (Press Association, 2019). Removal of the status for the state meant that policies developed centrally in Delhi would also be applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. The special status allowed Jammu and Kashmir to run an autonomous government with little interference from Delhi. Another development in the agenda is the approval of the new Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which discriminates against Indian people of other religions, particularly Muslims (see Ellis-Petersen 2019), as well as other demographics such as tribal communities.

Support for the BJP and the Hindutva agenda can be seen in the UK amongst the diaspora. Bhatt and Mukta (2000:435) state that '[s]ince the early 1990s Hindutva ideology and organization [sic] has become increasingly and, in some instances, dramatically visible in South Asian communities in the UK, the US, Canada, the Caribbean and eastern and southern Africa'. Jaffrelot and Therwath (2007) highlight how various organisations that are part of the *Sangh Parivar* spread the message of the Hindu right amongst the Indian Hindu diaspora in the UK. Two religious' figures, Swami Chinmayanand and Satyamitranand Giri, played key roles in driving the Hindutva movement across the diaspora (Jaffrelot and Therwath, 2007). In addition to these religious figures, the *Sangh Parivar* also connected with the *Swaminarayan* movement in the UK to extend their reach amongst the diaspora.[vii] Jaffrelot and Therwath (2007) stated that the *Swaminarayan* temple in Neasden, London had, and possibly still have, an exhibition about Hinduism with underlying messages of the Hindu nationalist right.

In November 2015, some 60,000 British Indians went to Wembley to see Narendra Modi during this trip to the UK. It is difficult to know for certain if all those who attended Wembley were supporters of Modi and the BJP or if they were simply there for the cultural event and/or to see the Prime Minister of India. According to the Guardian (2015) who cite some Muslim British Indians at the event who attended so they could be part of the cultural event. Supporters of the BJP were encouraging British Indian Hindus to vote for the Conservative Party in the last election. Darshna Soni (2019) reported that an organisation, called the Overseas Friends of the BJP, were actively encouraging people to vote for the Conservative Party as opposed to the Labour Party. The reason for this support for the Conservative Party came because Labour objected to the removal of the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir. Those who were considering voting for Labour were branded traitors to the Indian Hindu cause

(Soni, 2019). The BJP argued the organisation was not affiliated with and/or funded by them in any way.

The use of *darshan* by the Hindu right can be found across a range of media including prime time Hindi language serials. These serials are produced and broadcast in India, as well as broadcast around the world, including the UK. At the same time as the ideology of the Hindu right is becoming embedded in the serials, many of them are being consumed by Indian Hindu diaspora here in the UK. Therefore, a key factor that will be examined in this thesis is the possible acceptance, resistance or negotiation of the appropriated use of *darshan* and the associated ideology of the Hindu right. Exploration of this would lead to a consideration of what impact the appropriation of *darshan* may have on ways of looking and forms of engagement with the serials by the participants of this thesis. Therefore, I argue that the power dynamics of established characterisations of looking and engagement are not only, negotiated, ignored and possibly resisted but also blended so the women have control over how they navigate through the serials.

In order to comprehend the intersections of looking, engaging, politics and *darshan* in a diasporic setting, the contexts in which the serials are being viewed needs to be examined. These contexts were highlighted by Sturken and Cartwright (2017, see above), which, I argue, can help to develop new and more nuanced characterisations of looking, engagement, the connected power relations and assumed influence of the text. Particularly as the media landscape and the viewing practices of audiences have changed so much since the glance and the gaze were conceived.

Above I have outlined the main arguments and questions of this thesis. I also highlight the problems with previous conceptualisations of looking and engagement. The remainder of the chapter provides additional context to terms that will be used throughout this thesis; specifically Hinduism, caste, Indian Hindu diaspora in the UK, and the lives of women within the diaspora; as well as some background to some of the literature on audiences. However, definitions of what is meant by looking and engagement in this study will be considered. After which I introduce the characterisations I will be using in this thesis. These descriptions are a combination of established conceptualisations that have been reconsidered; as well as new characterisations all together.

1.1.3 Looking and Engagement in this Thesis

Scholars have referred to looking in different ways and it is commonly used interchangeably with seeing. Olin (1991) explained that each term that is used for looking has a specific connotation. For example, Olin (1991: 208) argued that the term "beholding"… has a religious connotation. In other words, to look at an image of God is to behold them not necessarily to look at them. Olin also refers to how the gaze is much more of a literary term. A characterisation used in literature to refer to 'a long ardent look' (Olin, 1991:209). In this thesis, I shall be using the term looking, as a characterisation that refers to the physical activity of using our eyes. This use of the term stems from Sturken and Cartwright (2017) and Maura Clancey's (1994) conceptualisation. Sturken and Cartwright's (2017) understanding of looking being the bodily function of the eyes. Clancey (1994) argued that studies of American television audiences, recognized that a person's use of television is dependent on the senses and so moved away from terms like 'viewing' or 'watching' and used terms like 'eyes on' the screen or 'ears on' to the sound of the television (Clancey, 1994).[viii] In other words, I understand and use the term looking in this thesis to refer to an audience member's eyes being used to see images, on the television screen. This use of the eyes is a physical function and is assumed to be taking place when the eyes are directed at the television screen. The reason I use the term looking as opposed to the others is because of the established meanings and connotations applied to characterisations. Essentially, through Olin I highlighted a couple of these characterisations and associated connotations, which have been critiqued and problematised in the established body of work (see Chapter 2). One key issue with terms such as watching, or, to gaze, is that they also characterise the kind of attention associated with that way of looking. In other words, looking and engagement were characterised under the same term.

The term engagement in this thesis refers to how absorbed or involved a viewer might become with the television programme or film. Other phrases that have been used in television and film scholarship to refer to engagement in such away include audience attention (Lull, 1990) or modes of attention or modes of reception (Fiske, 1987/2011). As mentioned above, quite often in text-based studies of film and television the terms used to characterise how much a viewer is engaged with a media text has been intertwined with characterisations that also describe a way of looking. For example, the gaze: the connotation of this term can refer to an elongated look whereby the viewers' eyes are always fixated on the screen. This kind of look then also implies that the viewer is concentrating entirely on the action on screen and are

therefore fully engaged and absorbed. And so, with this one phrase, the gaze can characterise the look and the engagement of a viewer. There is similar connotation to the glance, a look that is short and quick, thus implying that the engagement to be unfocused and distracted. Through these characterisations and what they connote there is the suggestion that by looking at a media text through quick short looks the viewer cannot become fully engaged with the text and vice versa. However, Lull (1990:164) rightly argued that '[l]ooking at the screen certainly does not mean that the viewer is giving full attention', implying that just because a viewer might have their eyes directed towards the screen, it does not mean they are absorbed in the programme. I argue the same can also be said if the viewer is not looking at the screen, this does not mean they are not engaged either.

However, in empirical, often ethnographic studies of audiences, researchers have found numerous forms of engagement occurring particularly in relation to audiences watching television. For example, Patricia Palmer (1986, cited in Fiske 1987/2011) found that children watched television in a variety of modes from being completely absorbed and fascinated with the text to just monitoring it. Lull (1990) also discusses other forms of engagement by citing Thomas Lindlof *et al.*'s (1987) descriptions of different viewing styles that include focused viewing, monitoring and idling. These styles ranged from fully absorbed and concentrating watching (focused viewing) to hardly looking or paying attention to the screen (idling). However, as with the gaze and the glance these characterisations were used to refer to looking and engagement. Lull (1990:165) argued that 'patterns of attention… must be considered in relation to modes of viewing'. In other words, different levels of engagement should be examined alongside different ways of looking, not together. In this thesis I aim to develop two separate sets of characterisations. One that focuses on different ways of looking, and another that focuses on different forms of engagement. In order to develop these, I will consider many of the contexts, such as those mentioned above.

1.1.4 Characterisations used in this Thesis

	Characterisation	Definition
Looking	Fully focused looking	Eyes always remain on the television screen, for long periods of times.
	Distracted looking	Eyes are directed to the television screen for short bursts of time.
	No looking	Eyes are not directed to the television screen for long periods of time.
	Darshan	Eyes are directed at the television screen when an exchange of looks can take place.
Engagement	Full engagement	Attention is entirely centred on the television programme.
	Partial engagement	Attention is split between what is happening in the television programme and other activities.
	No engagement	No attention is given to the television programme.
	Darshanic engagement	Attention is given to the television programme in order to partake in a darshanic exchange.
	Ruptured engagement	Attention and immersion into the television programme is interrupted through visual, aural or narrative disruption.
	Negotiated engagement	Attention is given to the television programme through an active lens that can be resistive, overlooking, and/or accepting/preferred.

Figure 1 Descriptions of terms used in the thesis.

Figure 1 is a table that outline the characterisations that will be used throughout this thesis. Alongside them are definitions of what they mean, the kinds of looking and engagement they refer to. Some of the characterisations I use partly stem from the established terms already highlighted above. Other terms are entirely new and have been developed in relation to the audience at the centre of this research. That is to say, the new characterisations used here, specifically refer to the ways of looking and forms of engagement for this group of older, Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women. It may be possible that they are applicable to

other demographical audiences and their consumption of other genres of television, however, this would require further empirical study.

The first characterisation that will be used in the thesis builds on is the gaze and Lindlof *et al.*'s (1987, cited in Lull, 1990) focused viewing. The characterisation of the gaze, as I have mentioned above, connote an elongated and concentrating look, as well as focused engagement, with the action on screen. I separate these out and will use fully focused looking to refer to times when the viewer is looking at the television screen for the entire time. Fully focused looking only ends when the programme finishes, or, goes to an advert break. The characterisation for engagement, will be fully engaged; which I define as the moments when a viewer is entirely immersed in the programme. No other activity is being undertaken; the viewer is engrossed in the diegetic world and the narrative of the programme.

Another conceptualisation I build on is Ellis' notion of the glance and Lindlof *et al.*'s (1987, cited in Lull, 1990) monitoring. These characterisations connote quick looks towards the television screen and engagement that is fleeting and unfocussed with the television programme itself. In this thesis I will use distracted looking to refer to moment when the viewer directs their eyes towards the television screen and the look can last just a few seconds but also minutes. This way of looking also builds on Modleski's (1981) use of distracted viewing (Modleski's terminology). Modleski's key argument was based on women's role in the home distracting them from television. However, I argue that distraction can come from other factors as I will discuss further in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The new engagement characterisation will be referred to partial engagement. Partial engagement refers to times when the viewer has some knowledge of what has occurred narratively in the programme. Their knowledge of the events of an episode is not necessarily complete, and some elements may have been missed but they have an overall idea of the action and narrative. Partial engagement and distracted looking also encompasses the third of Lindlof *et al.*'s (1987, cited in Lull, 1990) description as idling. This characterisation referred to looking and engaging with television as a temporary distraction (in Lull 1990: 165), in other words, a way to spend some time while waiting to do some other activity.

Moving away from established conceptualisations I will also use these additional descriptive terms. The first is no looking, which refers to times when the participants may leave the room while or at times when the participants' complete attention is taken away from the television

altogether. No engagement refers to times when the viewer has not been following the programme. This form of engagement can also be momentary and does not necessarily indicate the viewer has lost all interest in the programme.

The next characterisation is darshanic looking, which I will refer to as simply *darshan*, and darshanic engagement. *Darshan* refers to moments in the television programme where a figure/character, this character can be religious or non-religious, is presented in a full-frontal frame. In this frame, the viewer can look directly at the figure and vice versa allowing *darshan* to take place. Darshanic engagement refers to moments when a viewer partakes in *darshan* when presented with an image on screen that mimics the construction of *darshan*. This form of engagement is specific and unique to this audience, as they are practicing Hindus, which I discuss and contextualise in more detail, below.

Negotiated engagement and ruptured engagement will also be used in this thesis. Negotiated engagement refers to moments where the viewer actively analyses and chooses what parts of the text they want to engage with and which aspects they may ignore. Ruptured engagement is a form of engagement which can occur when a viewer is fully or partially engaged and immersed, but the viewer sees or hear something, often something traumatic, in the programme that brings them out of the diegetic world. I suggest that these forms of engagement would initially require the viewer to be either partially engaged or fully engaged with the action on screen and these could be either momentary shifts (i.e. a quick partaking of *darshan*) or a longer shift.

These potential shifts lead me to try and explain the nonparallel nature of these characterisations. Lull (1990) acknowledged, that if a viewer is looking at the television in a fully focused way, that does not mean the viewer is fully engaged with the programme. Conversely, if a viewer is looking at the television distractedly, it does not necessarily indicate the viewer is only partially engaged, or, not engaged. Finally, these characterisations of looking and engagement are not static. If a viewer begins to watch a serial and they are fully engaged, it may not remain this way for the duration of the episode. Engagement can be fluid, and the viewer may go from full engagement to ruptured engagement, to partial engagement. This description is just an example, as the flux and fluidity can vary a great deal. This oscillation can also be said for the different ways of looking. They too can vary and go from fully focused looking to no looking. The fluidity also highlights how different forms of engagement, and

different forms of looking progress, in a non-linear fashion. In other words, the viewer does not progress through fully engaged to partially engaged to not engaged; instead, they may go directly from fully engaged to not engaged.

1.2 Audience

Above I highlighted that the secondary aim of this thesis, is to bring to light the consumption practices and behaviours of a specific audience that has been overlooked within scholarly research. The audience at the centre of this study are older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women. These women have not been explored in studies such as those conducted by Morley (1980; 1986). Additionally, they have been neglected by scholarly work that examined women's consumption and viewing of soap operas in the 1980s (see Hobson, 1982). These were helpful studies as they gave us insight into not only how audiences negotiated the messages embedded in media texts based on a variety of characteristics such as their social, cultural, historical, and economic background (Morley, 1980; Ang, 1985) but also the role of television in everyday family life (Morley 1986 and Hobson 1982) and how television viewing practices differed along gender lines as well as with the introduction of multiple television sets. Many of these studies also provided spaces for women to voice their experiences of television, largely in the domestic sphere. However, the studies that examined broad samples of audiences such as Morley's study of the *Nationwide* audience, were made up of viewers from both genders, from numerous socio-economic backgrounds, as well as viewers from different races and ethnicities. Those studies that focused on specific audience groups they tended to be white families (Morley 1986), or white women (Hobson 1982) and from working- and middle-class backgrounds (Gray, 1992). During this time there were no detailed explorations or specific studies that recorded the experiences of women from the Indian Hindu diasporic community living in the UK who were also watching the same soap operas (such as *Crossroads* and *Dallas*) and other television programmes. On reflection, scholars, such as Ien Ang and Ellen Seiter, acknowledged that they did not take ethnicity into consideration in the studies they conducted in the 1980s (Brunsdon, 2000: 206).

These studies and others (Lull, 1990; Tufte, 2000) have also highlighted the different methods that were used to empirically explore audiences. Alasuutari (1999) highlighted an ethnographic turn in audience studies that stemmed from cultural studies. This change in audience research was particularly evident in the UK. The use of interviews, participant observations and focus groups took the research outside of a laboratory setting and placed it into the natural setting

of peoples' homes which at the time these studies were conducted was the main location for television viewing. The move away from laboratory conditions was important as it provided greater insight into private domestic spaces. With qualitative methods a more intimate picture can be understood of everyday life and the role of media within it. The private spaces were assumed to be feminine spaces (spaces occupied by women) and by conducting research within them, women's voices and experiences were being examined in a serious manner.

The methods used in these studies have informed my approach in this research. I will implement mixed methods to examine different contextual influences on ways of looking and forms of engagement. This will include a survey, to first establish who amongst this community are watching prime time Hindi language serials. This will be followed by qualitative research using interviews, textual analysis to study the programmes themselves and participant observations to gain insight into the physical spaces in which this audience watch television.

In the preceding paragraphs, I discussed the television audience studies of the 1980s that were largely influenced by the development of cultural studies, principally via Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies. A great deal has changed since the 1980s and audiences are examined through numerous intersections of personhood and experiences. Studies began to focus on and highlight the role of class in women's consumption of television (Andrea Press, 1991). bell hooks (1992) took an intersectional approach to explore the contexts around black American female film audiences. The work highlights the differences between audiences in terms of race as well as gender. Another area of study that broadened our understanding of the diversity of audiences is the exploration of diasporic viewers of film and television.

Over the last three decades, diasporic audience studies have focused on a couple of areas of exploration. Kevin Smets (2013:104) highlighted that the studies centred on 'on patterns of media consumption among one or more diasporas or diasporic audiences of transnational satellite broadcasts (e.g. TRT) or industries (e.g. Bollywood)'. In other words, studies such as those conducted by Barker & Andre (1996), and Barker (1998), examined how a diasporic community (for example the British South Asian diaspora) watch, listen and read media texts from their adopted homeland. In the case of the British South Asian diaspora, studies have examined how they watch British films and television programmes, read British newspapers and listen to British radio. Other studies have explored how diasporic communities (such as the Turkish speaking community in London) watch and become audiences of transnational

media (for example, television produced and broadcast from Turkey, (Robins and Aksoy 2000, 2003, 2005).

There are a few studies that examine the South Asian diaspora as audiences for film. Adrian Athique (2005) has examined not only how Indian films are viewed by the South Asian diasporic audiences in Australia, but also how the films are distributed and exhibited to the audience. In the UK there are studies that examine south Asian diasporic audiences of film and television. Shakuntala Banaji's (2002) study of young south Asian diasporic film goers' responses to the Bollywood film *Raja Hindustani* (1996). As part of the research, Banaji spoke to young people in India and amongst the UK South Asian diaspora. She found that to understand Indian (popular mainstream Hindi language) film, audience scholars ought to examine the numerous pleasures of Hindi cinema and the social-political context the audience occupies together. The socio-political context of the audience is an important factor to consider in this project because of the appropriation of *darshan* by the Hindu nationalist right and whether it is accepted or acknowledged by the diasporic audience. Banaji's later article (2005) focused primarily on responses of British South Asians about their consumption of popular Bollywood films. This paper is important because it provides insight and understanding into what it is that young members of the South Asian community in the UK enjoy and like about the Bollywood films they watch. It gives this research a logical starting point in which to consider some of the socio-political contexts that might be applicable to the audience at the centre of this study.

Another study examined the development of cinemas screening popular Hindi language films in the UK. Rajinder Dudrah's (2002) study of cinemas in Birmingham, highlighted that these spaces created a sense of belonging amongst the South Asian diaspora who visited the cinemas. Some of these studies focus on audiences in specific geographical locations within the UK, for example in London (Banaji) and Birmingham (Dudrah). In this study, I move to a different location, specifically the city of Preston in the north west of England. Preston is important for several reasons. Firstly, by focusing on Preston this study moves the debates away from the main urban areas of the UK with large South Asian diasporic population to smaller communities. Secondly, it is my home city and I know the community.

Athique, Banaji and Dudrah's studies examined film audiences but there is also work focused on television audiences. Gillespie's (1995) research on South Asian youths in Southall began to

fill a gap in scholarly work regarding how the diaspora watches television. In her study, she highlighted how South Asian families used the VCR[ix] to watch film and television content from India. However, her study mainly focused on young people and centred on their daily viewings of English language television programmes on British terrestrial television.

Since Gillespie's study, the kind of programmes watched by members of the diaspora has changed a great deal. From the early 2000s, a combination of faster internet and easy-to-access transnational television channels (either through subscriptions to Indian package channels or through Freeview) has made content from India readily available[x]. The increased access to media content from India is something I have observed first-hand and was one of the main motivations for undertaking this project. Since the late 2000s, I noticed some families, primarily the women within them, were no longer watching British/English language programmes, particularly the soap operas. Instead, they now watched Hindi language serials on channels such as Star Plus and Colors. These observations were only snapshots of the kind of television and media the family and the women were consuming, but I got the impression that a large part of their television consumption came from transnational digital channels. And it is this exclusivity of only watching or mostly watching Indian channels that made the observations stay with me. Previously I had only observed viewers occasionally change over the Indian channels to specifically watch a film or programme. Through these observations, several questions arose, such as why did the women change their consumption practices? What instigated the changes, could it have been the reduction in costs of channels available and/or more time to watch soap operas?

Identity has also been explored through the consumption of programmes on the Indian television network ZEE TV. Dudrah (2002a) work did not focus on women exclusively but examined responses from mixed members of the UK based ZEE TV audience. Dudrah also focused on the role television played in the development of a person's identity amongst the South Asian diaspora as opposed to how audiences watched television. Other studies that centre on Indian television explore the expansion of the Indian television market in India (Roy and Sen, 2014; Sundaram, 2013) rather than its expansion and rise in popularity in the UK amongst the diaspora. These are key studies that provide an excellent grounding for examining and exploring South Asian diasporic film and television audiences. They offer a base in terms of insight and methods on which to build this study and highlight key gaps. It is a combination of this literature that this study wishes to build upon.

1.3 Defining key terms.

In this section, I provide some background and definitions to the terms Hinduism and diaspora. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to provide detailed context or go through all the literature on the subject. However, some understanding as to what the terms refer to in this thesis is required.

1.3.1 Hinduism

Hinduism is a complicated and multi-faceted form of belief. On the one hand there are elements of Hinduism that can allow it to be described as a religion. However, many of its features and characteristics go against the Christian - western (predominately European) understanding of what a religion is; for example, unlike Christianity and Islam, there are many gods and goddess, as well as multiple texts and scriptures (Knott, 2016). Kim Knott (2016:103) explains that there is 'no core creed and few common teachings'. The emphasis in Hinduism is much more on the practices and principles as opposed to belief which is at the centre of religions like Christianity (Knott, 2016). This explanation highlights how much of the European and North American understanding of what constitutes a religion, is dictated by the influence of the three Abrahamic religions.

The term Hinduism itself is problematic. As Knott argues it 'implies a unified religious system, and indeed many Hindus and non-Hindus describe it in this way. Others, however, say there are many Hindu traditions even many Hinduisms: they are related to one another but remain different in important ways' (Knott, 2016:1). To clarify, even though it is a label used by many it can also be argued that there are numerous forms of Hinduism that vary across regions and states in India, between different classes and castes. Elements of the faith and interpretation of texts and scriptures may differ linguistically. Steven Vertovec (2000:1) also explains that:

> Hinduism outside India represents a divergent diaspora, not simply in that beliefs, practices and social formation develop differently from – indeed, many emerge to be quite unlike – these in the subcontinent. Hindu socio-religious phenomena and the identities of Hindu people from place to place outside India are often highly unlike each other, having travelled along diverse historical trajectories conditioned by a wide range of locally contextual factors.

In other words, those who follow the Hindu faith and live in countries like the UK, US, South Africa, Australia, and so forth, have formulated their own understanding of the faith. These formations are often very different from what is found in India, but also in other countries that host the Indian Hindu diaspora. Vertovec explains that this is largely to do with the kinds of journeys the diasporas have taken to these host nations. I further this explanation by also highlighting that the diversity of Hinduism within India itself, as discussed above, also leads to the differing forms of the faith amongst the diaspora.

When the terms Hindu and Hinduism are used it will principally refer to the form of Hinduism practiced and understood by the participants of this research. The participants beliefs, rituals, and understanding of the faith are influenced by several factors, stemming from geography (not only in India but also the UK), culture and society. In Chapter 3, I provide a more detailed outline of these practices but here I will give a brief overview. The participants are followers of the *Vaishnava* denomination of Hinduism.[xi] The community the participants are a part of follow traditions, rituals and celebrate festivals commonly seen in Gujarat and in other parts of northern India.[xii] These customs are mixed in with Gujarati based Hindu folk traditions such as celebrating the birth of the 19th century saint *Jalaram Bapa*. Other influences on practices can vary including the region of Gujarat from which the participant hails; the caste they identify with; whether they are twice diasporic and finally, whether or not they lived somewhere else in the UK prior to moving to Preston. As this is not the only formulation of Hinduism that will be discussed in the thesis, I will endeavour to detail the formation under discussion. For example, I describe the form of Hinduism practiced by Indian Hindus in Malaysia as following South Indian traditions based on Dravidian influences. Another iteration of Hinduism that will feature heavily throughout the thesis is the Sanskrit text based, high caste, north Indian iteration the faith.

1.3.2 Diaspora

Another key term that is used in this thesis and needs to be contextualised and defined is diaspora. The term diaspora was initially only used to refer to the exile and dispersal of Jews from Jerusalem in the 6th century BC. Robin Cohen (2008:1) highlights how 'the classical use of the term, usually capitalized [sic] as Diaspora and used only in the singular, was mainly confined to the study of the Jewish experience'. However, towards the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly in the 1980s, scholars and people of various diasporas used the term to refer to other communities of people no longer living in their place of origin. William

Safran (1991) stated that the different communities of people were using the term to refer to themselves or in some case they had the term placed upon them by the host societies. Safran (1991:83), using Walker Connor's definition as a base[xiii], expands our understanding of the term and argues that it can be applied to 'expatriate minority communities'. This was because they would share several characteristics which Safran uses to define diaspora. The characteristics are as follows;

> They and their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original "center" [sic] to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Safran, 1991:83-84).

Safran's' definition is mostly focused on home or the homeland and its maintenance as such in the minds and beliefs of the people who first moved away or were exiled as well as in the generations that followed.

Cohen (2008:17) draws on Safran's definition and understanding, as well as Gabriel Sheffer's 1986 collection of essays that broadened the debates of diasporas out to include communities such as the Chinese in South East Asia or Indians in East Africa, to develop a list of features that can help define a diasporic group. These features are listed in figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Features of a diaspora (Cohen, 2008:17)

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements;

4. an idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;

5. the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland;

6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate;

7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;

8. a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial; and

9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

In addition to the features of Cohen, Steven Vertovec (2004) furthers our understanding by differentiating between diaspora and terms like migration and transnationalism. For Vertovec migration refers to the actual movement of people as the re-formulations of a group's culture and society in a new place 'migration to involve the transference and reconstitution of cultural patterns and social relations in new setting, one that usually involves the migrants as minorities becoming set apart by "race," language, cultural traditions and religion' (2004:282). Transnationalism refers 'to the actual, ongoing exchanges of information, money and resources—as well as regular travel and communication—that members of a diaspora may undertake with others in the homeland or elsewhere within the globalized ethnic community' (Vertovec, 2004:282).

In this thesis, I use the term diaspora to refer to a community of people who are not native to the UK, but who have now settled in the country. There are now several generations of the diaspora in the UK. It also refers to a group of people who have experienced several features highlighted by Cohen, including the 'tolerance of pluralism'. The term diaspora refers to a group of people who have assimilated into the culture and society of the host country but have maintained 'a strong ethnic group consciousness' at the same time (Cohen, 2008:17). In the early stages of the research I had hoped to include women from all ages in the research; what I mean by this is I had hoped to explore women who were from multiple generations. From the

first-generation migrants to the UK, to second and third generation women who were born and brought up in the UK. As the second and third generation of women had not experienced the journey or move from home to a new country, I felt that migrant was not an adequate term to use. Further to this by the time I had started my research the many of the first generation of women had been in the UK for over 30 years, therefore, again I felt the best term to use to collectively describe the women is diaspora.

Literature often uses the terms Indian diaspora or South Asian diaspora when referring to communities. The problem with these terms is that they encompass large groups of people under one broad title – South Asian or Indian. South Asian can include communities of people from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal or Bhutan. Indian diaspora is a term that can be used to refer to people from different religious backgrounds, such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Jains, and so forth. It is for this reason I specify, in as much detail as possible, various identifying characteristics of personhood to describe the community. Elsewhere in the thesis and where possible, I will refer to diasporic groups with specific characterisations. For example, the Indian Hindu diaspora will be used to refer to people who are followers of the Hindu faith and whose family originated from all over modern India, as well as from all class and caste backgrounds.

1.3.3 Hybridity

The literature discussed above highlight a mixed and varied formulation of identity that can move and be negotiated. Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram (2003:32) point to a change in theorisations about diasporas; the shift moved away from 'static binary notions [of diaspora] towards more complex and nuanced understandings'. In other words, scholarship on diaspora for a time focused on how diasporas brought in their home cultures and society into a host culture and society. The implication was that the diasporic community did not partake in the cultural or society practices of the host country or if a member of the diaspora did, they forgot or 'gave-up' their home culture. This is the static binary Puwar and Raghuram refer to above. However, scholars began to see how diasporic groups could occupy multiple cultures, and considered concepts of hybridity (sometimes referred to as 'in-betweenness') (Brah and Coombs, 2000).

The term hybridity has been used to refer to not only how diasporic communities develop new formulations of identity but also how broad elements of both diasporic and host cultures are

influenced by the diasporic experience. Homi Bhabha (1994) used the term hybridity to refer to the notion of how a person who is part of a diaspora can find and use aspects of their home culture and colonial history to influence their lives in the host country. By acknowledging these pasts and allowing other cultures to be fed into host cultures, a multicultural society is created. Hutnyk highlights that the blending of home cultures and host cultures is a 'process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences' (Bhabha, 1994 in Hutnyk, 2010:60).
Homi Bhabha argues that through hybridity - through the process of translation and re-understanding the values of cultural practices, new traditions and forms can be introduced to society.

Stuart Hall (1995, cited in Hutnyk, 2010) used the term hybridity to discuss the ways in which British diasporic communities have begun to formulate mixed identities. Members of the community would describe themselves as British Indian or British Chinese. In addition to this Hall also used the terms to discuss how the various diasporic communities in the UK changed British life and society (Hutnyk, 2010:60). For Gilroy hybridity is a great phrase to use to talk about the combined and blended forms of cultural production that diasporic communities bring to host nations. For example, hip hop blends together music of the Caribbean with the social issues and urban life of the Bronx (Hutnyk, 2010:60).

A key issue with hybridity is the implication that the communities being discussed had a choice, or there was freedom to choose whether to engage with host cultures and traditions, or, ignore them. In most cases the communities did not have a choice, and some aspects of the host culture and society had to be embraced, such as language, education system, media and so on. The consumption of media is of interest in this thesis as many diasporic groups could only access media content that was on offer by British institutions like the BBC. Much of the content was produced was in English; but the occasional programme that was not was also produced by the same media institutions and still held some colonial views. For example, the early Hindi language programmes on the BBC assumed the diaspora had no knowledge or understanding of life in the UK[xiv] (Hundel, 2009). I discuss the hybrid, plural consumption of media in more detail below, but I wanted to return to the notion that a middle ground could be occupied by diasporic groups. Homi Bhabha (in Hutnyk, 2010) elaborated the concept of the 'third space'. For Bhabha the third space is not the homeland (first space) - it is also not the new (host) country (second space) - but a specific blended space that diaspora occupy between the two - an 'inbetweeness'.

1.3.4 Caste and *Jati*

Caste is a way of organising society; some argue stem from Vedic traditions, although Meera Dhanda et al. (2014:3) do highlight 'the origins of caste and the mechanisms of its perpetuation are a matter of controversy'. According to Kim Knott (2016) these groups differed along the lines of purity and not in terms of wealth. In other words, the configurations of the groups were based on how clean and pure people were to undertake religious rituals. However, there can be other factors that connect to caste. Dhanda et al. (citing Doniger, 2011) argued that 'sometimes the inherited identities are occupational in origin; or derived from the clans, guilds, religious sects or tribes historically integrated into Indian society as castes' (2014:3).

The four main groups (or *varnas*) of early forms of caste were, *Brahmins* (priests), *Kshatriya* (warriors, rulers), *Vaishya* (traders, artisans), and *Shudra* (labourers)' (Waughray and Dhanda, 2016:184). During Vedic times, it was only the priests who were pure enough to perform ceremonies and rituals, therefore they often performed them on behalf of people from other *varnas* (groups or class). Later caste came to define and be associated with people's job roles. For example, because Brahmins were understood to be the purest, they would be priests and perform all religious rituals and offerings.

Another concept that is closely related to caste is *jati* (literal translation means birth) (Knott, 2016; Dhanda et al 2014). '*Jati* refers to being part of a social group which is hereditary and endogamous'[xv]… The concept of *jati* is cultural and cross - religious; it is not limited to Hindus' (Waughery and Dhanda, 2016:184). In other words, *jatis* are smaller communities of people that can differ regionally across not only India but also across Muslim and Sikh communities as well. *Jatis* are not like the *varnas* and can change as *jatis* can either come together or separate out into various subgroups (Dhanda et. al, 2014). During the time of the British Raj in the nineteenth century a census was taken and a gradual shift in understanding caste began to take place. The move away from the religious idea of purity on which the original *varnas* were established made way to a more occupation related criterion of caste (Bhatt and Mukta, (2000); Waughray and Dhanda 2016).

Caste and *jati* are complicated and changing social structures that were utilised by the Hindu nationalist right during the fight for independence. When the British conducted censuses

during the Raj, government officials and ruling elites learned of the vast number of castes and *jatis* within the communities across India. Once it was understood just how broad the spectrum was it became very difficult for the few elites to represent the many. To 'act on behalf of and defend a 'unified' Hindu community [the leader] has had to contend with the reality of differential caste interests, and with the hierarchy of privilege and lack of privilege that the caste structure has historically held' (Bhatt and Mukta, 2000:423 - 424). Those within the ruling, upper castes used the establishment of so many caste identities by merging them with political aims. 'This dynamic was to mark the nature of social movements, as well as the very basis of a mature nationalism. It was to lead to the caste-based politics witnessed in post-Independence India' (Bhatt and Mukta, 2000:423).

Bhatt and Mukta (2000) explained that during the Raj many people from *Dalit* and *Adivasi* communities converted to Christianity. Within Christianity there was no caste system. However, in order to cement the Hindu majority, the right-wing Hindu nationalist organisation the Arya Samaj began to offer those who had converted to Christianity a way back to a 'new and more inclusive' form of Hinduism. Those who wished to come back to Hinduism would need to undergo a purification ceremony called *shuddhi*. The Arya Samaj proselytised the idea that caste was not a group you had to be born into. People could now convert themselves into other castes by undergoing the purification ceremony (Bhatt and Mukta, 2000:422). The changes imply that some Vedic notions of caste can be modified. For example, people are not restricted to the caste they are born into. But on the other hand, the Arya Samaj still promote the idea of being pure. The representation of caste in films and its related connotations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, while the inclusion of high caste families in prime-time Hindi language serials and the associated meanings are examined in Chapter 4. In the UK, across various religious and cultural traditions from South Asia, caste is understood to be a blend of *varna*, *jati* and *biradari*.[xvi] Dhanda et al. (2014) state that in Britain when the term caste is used it is more along the lines of *jati* as opposed to the Vedic based *varna* groupings.

1.4 Indian Hindu diaspora in the UK.

In this section I briefly outline the patterns of movement of the Indian diaspora. I begin with a broad discussion that incorporates the migration of Indians from different religions and regions.

1.4.1 Indian Diaspora

Communities from India have migrated far and wide, particularly during the twentieth century. These groups of people now reside in continents as far as Australasia, North and South America, Europe and Africa as well as other parts of Asia (Dwyer, 2008). The early westward migration of these communities came during mid-nineteenth century, when large numbers of migrants left India with the European colonial powers who had colonised most of India from the seventeenth century. The British needed labourers in their African colonies to build railroads and so men looking for work left the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra to work in Kenya, Uganda and South Africa. These migrant workers then stayed in East and South Africa.

This brief introduction highlights that are there multiple Indian diasporas as well as numerous Indian Hindu diasporas. Indian diasporas can vary vastly based on religion (Muslim, Sikh, Christian and so forth), region (north, south, east, west), class and language to name but a few intersections. Gijsbert Oonk (2007) explains that various migration patterns of people not only from India but across the South Asian sub-continent can be divided and subdivided based on when the people moved and where they settled. Therefore, the remainder of this section focuses on the Indian Hindu diaspora that arrived in the UK after the Second World War and continued to do so in the subsequent decades.

In the early part of the twentieth century, there were relatively few Indians living in the UK. It is unknown how many Hindus were living in the UK during the first half of the 20th century. The 1945 census states there were approximately 7,000 Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims residing in the UK. This combined figure makes it difficult to establish actual numbers of people from different religious or, class backgrounds or in terms of gender (Tinker, 1977 in Burghart 1987). After the Second World War, immigration to the UK was unrestricted particularly for those from ex-British colonies. This led to an influx of Indian Hindus/Muslims/Sikhs arriving in the UK. The migration at this time was largely influenced by the partitioning of India in 1947. Millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were displaced and a large proportion of these refugees, particularly those who came from the Punjab, migrated to the UK. Beyond the disruption caused by partition but around the same time, a small number of people from the state of Gujarat also migrated to the UK. A large proportion of the men who came originally planned on staying and working in the UK for a few years and then returning to their families back in

India. They regularly sent money back to help their families relocate and settle. These migrants settled in towns and cities such as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Bradford.

Family and friends in India heard of opportunities through the early communities who migrated, thus increasing the number of people following their kin to the UK. The UK introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962 that allowed only those with British passports to come to the UK. Coinciding with the introduction of this Act was the British government relinquishing control of several African nations. Countries like Kenya and Uganda gained their independence from the UK and other European colonial rulers, and the new governments of these nations began implementing policies of Africanization. In this context, Africanization meant that new policies prioritised the black African population which led many Indians to move. Some of the Indians went back to India where they still had ancestral homes, while others came straight to the UK as they had British passports (Burghart, 1987:8). Many refugees from India arriving in this country during the late 1960s and early 1970s came from the state of Gujarat. Even though they may have been quite wealthy in East Africa, they were only allowed to leave with a small amount of money (often no more than £50) and their belongings. It was around this time, in the early-mid 1960s, that more women and whole families decided to come from India and join their husbands in the UK. Many refugees from the newly independent African nations and migrants from India followed earlier patterns of migration into the UK that had been established by other diasporas, such as the Caribbean diaspora.

The immigrants who migrated to the UK during this time were mostly working class, semi-skilled or unskilled labourers, with some exceptions. Many of the working-class migrants took up jobs as cleaners or factory workers in the cities in which they settled (Brah, 1996 & Ballard, 1994; 2003). However, this was not the case for other nations who also experienced an influx of Indian immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s. The US saw more professionals such as doctors or engineers move to the country. 'The Indian immigrants who migrated to the United States at that time were immediately absorbed into society and, as a result, soon attained middle-class status' (Somani and Guo, 2018:64). The process of social mobility has taken much longer in the UK. The British Indian diaspora has largely through the second and third generation that the community is becoming middle-class.

1.4.2 Indian Hindu Diasporic Women in the UK

The audience at the centre of this study is made up of women over the age of 50 from the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic community in Preston, Lancashire. In this section, I provide some background and context to women's diasporic experiences and break away from the assumptions made about women from this community. The assumptions are arising not only in the academy but also in politics and the media. It is important that their background and diasporic experience is understood as these life experiences can and do play a role in how a television viewer looks at, and engages with, the medium.

The women who inform the research are mostly part of the first generation of the diaspora who arrived in the UK between the late 1960s and early 1980s. They settled in the then textile town of Preston. I decided to focus on Preston and the women from the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diaspora because I identify as such myself. I was born and raised in Preston. I provide further details into my background and position in Chapter 3 but here I want to say that some of the context I provide below and throughout the thesis are drawn from my own experiences, observations and family history. The reflection of lived experience given throughout this thesis is punctuated with literature from scholars who have theorised and contextualised diasporic lives.

The experiences of migration by Indian diasporic women has largely been overlooked. Avtar Brah (1996:67) highlights the broad intersections that need to be explored in order to

> understand fully the life experiences of Asian women in Britain, it is necessary to analyse the socio-cultural processes of colonialism and imperialism, the historical basis of the international division of labour and the position of women in the global economy.

In other words, to understand the role and the position of Asian diasporic women, whether they be Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi; one needs to understand a complicated interwoven relationship between history, the social and cultural impact of colonialism and imperialism and the role these women play in the larger global economy. Brah outlines how women from the diaspora were perceived by British institutions as oppressed, passive and with no agency (1996). Work by Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram (2003) and Emma Tomlin (2014) also highlight the lack of Indian diasporic women's' voices in literature of various genres.

The times when women's experiences were discussed it was in relation to men. Ambe Pande (2017) further explained how in the literature there was little to separate their journeys, or various aspects of their personhood. Pande (2017:1) describes some of the difference's women experienced during migration:

> highly skilled women professional, they successfully balance domestic live with professional life. Similarly, semiskilled and skilled women migrants risk the hostilities of a new environment and struggle to improve the conditions of their families back home and at the same time enhance their own career prospects. Women married into diaspora families attempt to recreate home and culture in a foreign setting often ridden with politics of race. As the indentured labourers, women faced the tyranny of the plantation life as well as exploitation by their own men yet rapidly adapting and liberating themselves through education and economic opportunities.

Pande's work highlights the range of conditions and emotions women experienced as migrants. These included being successful at assimilating and adapting to a new way of living and a new society to those women who tried to remember their homeland by embracing various practices that were undertaken prior to their move. The experiences discussed In Pande's explanation covers broad groups of women. For example, the first generation of women to arrive in the UK who embraced and implemented cultural and religious practices of their homeland in their new host countries, as well as, professionals who have moved into new countries in the last 30 or so years.

Many of these ideas were discourses that did not derive from lived experience but stemmed from observations during colonial times and remained even after World War Two. South Asian women were seen through the lens of immigration law as simply being dependants and therefore not a threat to the labour market, unlike men from the diaspora (Brah, 1996). Others have also noted this assumption about South Asian women and have noted how it is seen as problematic by British institutions (Warrier, 1994). Shrikala Warrier is arguing that the image of South Asian women, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, is commonly represented as subordinate and voiceless. This is an idea that is regularly suggested by media and policymakers, who expect women, as Emma Tomlin argues, to be found confined to the private domestic sphere (Tomlin, 2014:182). Tomlin acknowledges that in some communities, namely Pakistani and Bangladeshi, this may be the case. This expectation, of being confined to the private sphere, is still being put forward into the mainstream arena by policymakers and the media, notably when David Cameron announced in January 2016 that there will be a

provision of English language courses provided for women of Islamic faith (BBC, 2016). However, the way the media and policymakers portray South Asian women, can seem like all women from the community, no matter what their ethnicity or religion, are confined to the private sphere. Tomlin argues that policymakers and the media ignore the role South Asian women play in the wider economy and focus on their roles as wife, mother and homemaker (Tomlin, 2014:182). In this section, I want to move away from this assumption of Indian Hindu diasporic women as passive and consider a some of the factors stated by Brah above. I focus on providing context around the arrival of Indian diasporic women and girls to the UK and the culture and society in which they lived. I hope to highlight that the lived experience of these women and girls within the diaspora is complex and varied.

The first generation of adult Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women arrived in the U.K. in several ways. Pande (2017) explains that Indian diasporic women moved either from India or East Africa to the UK under male dominated structures. That is to say (as Pande (2017) explains) – 'they moved under patriarchal frameworks' - women moved because they had married men who were living abroad or it was their fathers who decided to move, or their husbands, brothers or grandfathers, possibly even uncles.

Pande's contextualisation marries with my observations and knowledge of a small part of the community. I know of women who came to join their husbands who had migrated earlier to work in the U.K. and had decided to settle down in the country. These women were married whilst both they and their husbands lived in India, but the husband had left to work for British companies in the UK. At the same time, I also know other adult women arrived in the UK with their husbands and children from either East Africa or India, including young and teenage girls. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s women arrived in the UK as newly married brides. They had married men who had settled in the UK, perhaps as young boys or teenagers with their families in the 1950s and 1960s but returned to India to get married.

The process of marriage has changed over time from arranged marriages to what I describe as love marriages: marriages where women (and men) have been able to choose their own partners. Brah argues that initially 'the great majority of the Asian adolescents expected their marriages to be arranged' (Brah, 1996:77). And like the men, some women who initially arrived in the UK as teenagers and young girls did return to India during the 1970s and 1980s to find a partner, as I have mentioned above, while others found partners in the UK. Parents

introduced their sons and daughters to potential spouses through connections made from a network of extended family members, either in the UK or back in India. However, Brah found that even though they were expected to have arranged marriages many of the Asian girls did also hope for a say in their future partner (Brah, 1996). Today, some second-generation Indian Hindu diasporic men and women still have arranged/parental assisted marriages, but with the couple being given the opportunity to get to know each other and go dating for some time before they decide on marriage. Other men and women can find their own partners. From my experience growing up in the community, it was quite often the norm for women to marry men from their caste and community, they were often matched together through parents and extended family networks, but this was not always the case. In recent times I have noticed women marrying partners they have met outside of these networks and to partners from not only different castes and communities but from different religions and races.

Before I continue the discussion on marriage and gender relations within the community, it is important to define the term patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy has been interrogated by feminist scholars in a manner that highlights how problematic the term is to define, as well as its relation to different feminisms. In broad terms I take my understanding of patriarchy from Sylvia Walby (1989), who argues, that patriarchy refers to a social structure that is unequal along gender lines. The structures place men in position of dominance and women in positions of subordination. Specifically, in this thesis, patriarchy refers to the manner in which the home, religion and cultural aspects of the women's lives are dominated by men and gendered strictures (Walby, 1989). I understand patriarchy to refer to a concept that can be used as a way to explain women's position within society' (Bhopal, 1997:6).

It is incorrect to assume that all marriages were heavily patriarchal, and women were confined to the domestic setting, as discussed above. Aparna Rayaprol's (1997) provides insight into the understanding of the gender politics within marriages of Indian Hindu couples. Rayaparol highlights how most of her participants saw themselves as traditional. The term traditional is being used here in relation to Hochschild's description where women identify more the home and private sphere than with a place of work (Hochschilds 1989 in Rayaprol 1997). In other words, the women, even though they are part of the labour market they formulate their identity through their home lives. Many of their roles in the private sphere are gendered roles, such as cooking, upkeep of the home and bringing up the children. Although Rayaprol is referring to a specific diasporic community of South Indians living in the USA, there are

similarities here with some British Indian Gujarati speaking Hindu women. From my own experience, many women in my family would consider themselves to be traditional women in the same way Rayaprol's participants identified themselves. Looking back my mother, grandmother and aunts all had low paying jobs, but their focus seemed to be more on home life.

However, though there was an identification with home life, I did see and experience some contradictions about marriage and gender politics between what my mother or other female family members did when compared to what they said. Rayaprol found a disconnect between what the women in her study understand of marriage and their actions and practices. In other words, Rayaprol's (1997:113) participants did 'advocate patriarchal values and acknowledged the superiors role of the man in a marriage'; but their actions implied the marriages were more equal and negotiated. Therefore, even though the women would do most, if not all the domestic chores there was some negotiation occurs between the couples, for example many women would drive, they had some control of their own finances as well as join control over the family's; they also had equal say in family discussions and decisions. Rayaparol suggests that within her sample 'there is no visible trend either toward complete egalitarianism or toward perpetual patriarchy' (1997:107). This description of married life is reminiscent of my parent's relationship. For example, women still maintain and focus on many of the domestic duties, from cooking, cleaning to shopping. Some also continue to provide childcare, although to grandchild as opposed to their own children. While the main roles for men are associated with, DIY or motoring. On occasion I have observed men helping women with some chores or with cooking. My father often helps my mother with cooking if they are expecting guests.

From my own observations and as a second-generation Indian Hindu living in the UK, women no longer identify with the home in the same way the participants did above. Instead they are defined and identify more in relation to their role in the workplace. Rayaprol (1997:109, citing Hochschilds) refers to this as 'transitional'. Hasmita Ramji (2003) notes how the second and even third generation of women's earning power gives them agency to negotiate and make choices both domestically as well as in public. The gender politics within marriages of second-generation diaspora in my own family suggest an equal relationship. Chores within the home and childcare are shared equally in addition to work outside of the home.

Most women from the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic community in Preston (that I am familiar) with went out to work and/or had some form of paid work within the home, I briefly touch on this in the preceding paragraphs. Brah argues that adult Indian Hindu women had to join the labour force once they arrived in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s to help pay for mortgages and general living costs (Brah, 1996:70). Most women who migrated from India or East Africa worked in 'low-paid, semi-skilled and unskilled work in the manufacturing sector, particularly in the clothing and textile industries' (Beechey and Whitelegg 1986 in Brah, 1996:71). Within my own family my mother worked in Woolworths for 38 years. Initially she was a shop assistant but later worked in the cash office. My maternal grandmother worked part time in Kirkham, a small town near the Fylde coast. Along with other older women amongst the community she worked at the Fox's biscuit factory in the evenings until she retired in early 1990s. Other women were known to work in textiles mills and other retail outlets.

In addition to working, the women were expected to be homemakers and responsible for bringing up the children. Many duties such as cooking, cleaning and maintaining the family home were the responsibility of the women. Many girls were also expected to help mothers in these duties. However, Brah (1996) explains that women or the girls within the family did not fully accept this notion and did think that men should also assist with the housework. Asian teenage girls strongly opposed the idea that it was only women and girls do household chores and insisted that it ought to be shared equally by men and women (Brah, 1996). At the time of Brah's research, the teenage girls Brah spoke to would either have been part of the first generation of women to arrive in the UK but were babies or toddlers; or they were part of the second generation of women, some of the first women to be born in the UK. Here we begin to see a difference between expectation and reality. Growing up, it was partly my responsibility to help my mother and grandmother maintain the home and look after my young brother. Similarly, to the teenagers from Brah's research I too thought domestic chores should be shared. Over recent years I have seen second and third generation men and women share household chores equally; and both parents take on caring duties of children.

Another role the women were either allocated or took upon themselves was that of cultural transmitters. Jackson and Nesbitt's 1993 study of young children amongst the British Indian Hindu diaspora in Coventry observed how women are the bearers of culture. In other words, Jackson and Nesbitt describe women to be the main family member to teach children in the

family and further afield in the community about Indian culture and Hindu traditions. Women were observed transferring knowledge of religion and culture in several different ways that included telling the children stories. The stories could be religious and devotional folktales as well as about Indian history. The audio-visual material also played a vital role in how women taught children about family and cultural traditions. Jackson and Nesbitt observed the use of playing devotional hymns (*bhajans*) on cassette tapes and watching Indian films recorded on videos. The women also screened home videos of family events such as weddings (Jackson and Nesbitt, 1993). It should be noted here that this was not the only media the women consumed, as I discuss below. My own experience of this is mixed, growing up in the 1980s, it was mostly men who acted as cultural transmitters in public spaces, such as the temple. They would lead the retelling of mythological stories as well as the language classes. However, there was one cultural tradition the women took a lead role, this was teaching and choreographing traditional folk dances to young girls. Rayaprol (1997) also observes similar gendered practices in her research as she acknowledges that women continued with activities such as classical dance. However, much later I did observe women not only teaching language classes but also classes in reading and understanding sacred texts such as the Bhagavad Gita. I also know that they teach young children of both genders, devotional hymns and some of the rituals for *puja*. That is not to say men amongst the community stopped being cultural transmitters, it became a joint activity across both men and women, although teaching folk dances remains women only led activity.

Young girls and teenagers of school age who arrived in the UK with their families joined the English education system. Some girls and teenagers in the 1960s and 1970s were in school for only a year or so as compulsory schooling was up to the age of 16, after which they went on to work in similar low-paid jobs like other women from the community. Young girls, who had attended school for longer, compared to older girls tended to have high job aspirations (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993). However, it is difficult to know if these girls' aspirations came to fruition as Jackson and Nesbitt did not continue their research. From my knowledge of my own community it was mainly the second and third generation of young girls who were able to achieve high job aspirations.

As I stated above, the Hindi and Gujarati language devotional and religious audio-visual material were not the only media the women consumed. Women also had access to a broad

range of English language media as well as other Hindi and Gujarati language media. I have written elsewhere (Lad, 2016) of remembering women, like my mother, who is an older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic woman, watching prime time British, Australian and American soap operas such as *Coronation Street* (1960 -, ITV)*, Sons and Daughters* (1982 – 1987, Seven Network)*,* and *Dallas* (1978 – 1991, CBS). A participant of the pilot survey I conducted, recounted to me of her eagerness to watch and not miss any episodes of *Dallas* during the 1980s. Gillespie (1995) also notes in her study how her young participants watch the Australian soap opera *Neighbours* (1985 – Fremantle Media Australia) with their mothers, thus highlighting ways in which women watched other programmes.

Gillespie's observations emphasise that the young people and the women of the diaspora have knowledge of different cultures. It also relates to my understanding and use of the term diaspora in this thesis as referring to a community of people who pursue plural cultural practices and traditions. I examine this idea further in Chapter 5 where my participants discuss the different kinds of programme, they used to watch. They mention watching programmes aimed at families, such as *The Generation Game* (1998 – 2001, BBC) and soap operas and dramas such as *EastEnders* (1985 -, BBC) and *Dallas* (1978 – 1991, CBS). These responses suggest that not all the women's' television consumption was for their pleasure but the pleasure of the family.

The discussions above highlight a mixed and varied formulation of identity that can move and be negotiated. I argue that for the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women in this study hybridity is largely to do with cultural mixing. Diasporic people take on various aspects of the host country's culture. The diasporic people then re-work these cultures and reform them and reconfigure them. However, we must be careful when using the term hybridity because it can 'imply a weakening of a supposedly once pure culture' (Hutnyk, 2010:60). The idea of pure cultures is what drives many nationalists and chauvinistic agendas.

In this section I have provided some context to the experiences of Indian Hindu diasporic women in the UK. These have been alongside my own observations and experiences of being a second-generation Indian Hindu diasporic woman myself. My aim in the section was to highlight that much of what is written about Indian Hindu diasporic women is based on broad brush stoke generalisations that are not applicable throughout the community. The experiences and lives of Indian Hindu diasporic women is complex.

1.5 Chapter Overview and Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the main aim and scope of the study. In doing this I highlighted the two key areas within which this works sits. First the research sits within the body of work that has examined characterisations of looking and engagement with television; I seek to differentiate and deepen our understanding of how a viewer looks at, and engages with, television. Second, this research sits within audiences' studies as it hopes to record the viewing habits and practices of an audience that has been overlooked in previous studies. The research focuses on the looking and engagement of older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women who live in the city of Preston, while they watch prime time Hindi language serials. I introduced my main argument, that looking at and engagement with television, for the women who are part of this study, is complex, nuanced and in constant flux. I further argue that a combination of factors can have an influence on how these women look at and engage with television. These factors are based on external factors from the programmes themselves to the rooms where they watch television, internal factors based on their identities and lived experiences.

In the chapter I also provide some background into how the project was developed which also began to offer some reflection of my role in this study. Through this reflection I gave some broad context about Hinduism and the version of it that I am most familiar; as well as some background to the Indian Hindu diasporic community in the UK, with emphasis on the women. Again, this was partly from my lived experience as a member of the community.

The remainder of the thesis is structured in the following way: In chapter 1 I examine scholarly work that has previously discussed ideas around looking at and engagement with television; as well as work on audiences. Some initial discussion of key texts has also taken place in this chapter but in chapter 1 I interrogate this literature further, in order to establish a framework within which to base this study. In chapter I outline and critically examine the ethnographic methods used in the study. In chapter 3 I establish, through textual analysis that opportunities for viewers to take *darshan* in the serials. The focus, in this chapter, centres on the visual and aural conventions in the serials and explores how these scenes maybe read on a primary level, but also through secondary readings as well. Through interviews, I examine the participants understanding of the concept of *darshan,* and the opportunities presented to them in the serials. In chapter 4 the focus remains on the serials, but this time moves to explore the

narratives and the role of the characters within the narrative of the serials. Through this lens, I explore the how pleasure is a complex and nuanced concept, that is experienced by the participants while they watch prime-time serials. There are numerous factors to consider such as recognition and identification with characters, topics and themes of narratives. The portrayal of real emotions can also lead to pleasure being found in 'having a good cry' – so pleasure can also be an emotional release. In chapter 5, the observations and interviews reveal that most participants who took part in the qualitative parts of my research had never watched television until they arrived in the UK. Therefore, they only began to watch television once here in the UK, and it was mostly British public service broadcast and commercial television. This exposure to British television emphasises how the experience of watching certain kinds of television can have an impact on ways of looking at and engaging with television. Chapter 6 highlights the impact physical space and involvement in activities while watching television can have on looking. The findings reveal that the participants watched television in very similar spaces, their living rooms. Each participant took the position that dictated that their primary activity was to watch television indicating that other activities were supplementary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine work that has explored looking at, and engagement with, film and television texts, as well as studies of audiences. Looking at, and engaging with, film and television is complicated. The various conceptions can be difficult to understand. In order to help navigate through the literature, it is vital that various factors (that can influence looking and engagement) are examined. These factors can be understood by asking questions such as, who is the viewer doing the looking and engaging? As well as further questions around what kind of television are they looking and engaging with; where is this looking and engaging taking place and why are they looking and engaging? In addition to these questions, Margaret Olin (1991) emphasised that the rules and regulations of the culture where the looking, and engagement, is taking place also needs to be acknowledged.

The first section of the chapter focuses on literature that examines film. I begin with Laura Mulvey's 1975 article as a base, from which I then extend into other debates around looking at, and engagement with, mainly, mainstream American films. The section then moves into discussion of popular Hindi language films, and their audiences in India as well as amongst the UK diaspora. The second section, discusses literature on looking at and engagement with television. Similarly, to the previous section, it then examines scholarship of *darshan* and television as well as studies of television audiences. The third section, moves discussions onto Indian diasporic text-based studies and then audience studies. The final section, centres on literature that has focused on examining soap operas.

2. 2 Looking at & Engagement with Film

In this section, I examine work by North American and British scholars whose arguments focus on understanding how spectators look at and engage with, mostly, North American mainstream film.

North American and European centred discussions focused on looking that was driven by gender imbalance and grounded in psychoanalysis. Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' has been the base for many debates and discussions around the look and engagement of the film spectator. Using psychoanalysis Mulvey demonstrated how the film text, specifically films from the classic Hollywood era, placed the film spectator in the position of the male protagonist. In other words, the narrative of many classic Hollywood films

is told and understood from a male perspective. In the article Mulvey argued that patriarchal society has influenced the structure of classic Hollywood cinema, thus perpetuating, and reinforcing a male dominant ideology (Mulvey, 1975). Focussing on melodramas from the 1940s, Mulvey argued that films placed the power of looking on the side of the male. This was emphasised through three kinds of looks found in film. First, the looks within the scene between the characters, the second, the look of the camera at the scene (normally from the male protagonists' point of view), and finally the look of the male spectator at the screen. All three looks are fixed on the female character within the film. This meant that women are objectified by the male gaze and men, as spectators and protagonists, are put in a position of control.

The positioning of spectators on the side of the male characters created a binary distinction between male = active and female = passive. Mulvey argued that images are constructed for the visual pleasure (scopophilic) and gratification of the male spectator, or, in her words, 'in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female' (Mulvey, 1975:9). Women are placed 'in their traditional exhibitionist role… with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey, 1975:9).

With psychoanalysis Mulvey examined the active and passive roles of the genders further. Mulvey used Freud, to theorise the notion of pleasure through looking, and, how that places the object of the look in a passive position. Freud's initial analysis of scopophilia was understood to be instinctual and based on curiosity. This was not necessarily sexualised looking or erotic looking as Mulvey, citing Freud, explains 'voyeuristic activities of children, their desire to see and make sure of the private and forbidden' (1975:8). Instead, Freud suggested that it is inquisitive looking that is occurring. Mulvey points out that this understanding of scopophilia is an active form of looking, and feeds into Freud's later analysis, theorisation was deepened. Freud highlighted how the instinct can change and be influenced by other aspects of our subconscious. The impact of this influence can lead to an 'erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as object'. In other words, the natural feeling of pleasurable looking can become sexualised as other factors such as hormones, or, exposure to specific visuals come to influence us. The sexualised pleasure that is gained from looking at another person can lead to the other person being an object, thus allowing the person who is looking to control the look and creating an imbalanced power relation. The sexualised

pleasure, according to Freud, stems from the ego having an impact on the instinct we must look. Mulvey argues that mainstream Hollywood films are constructed in a way that the spectator is actively encouraged to look. But the characters on screen are not aware of this look from the spectator taking place. Mulvey further argues, that the cinema auditorium heightens, the voyeuristic role of the spectator, as they look upon the world, that is presented to them on the screen (1975). To emphasise the scopophilic elements of film and the provocation of the gaze, Mulvey argued that the darkened auditorium, large confrontational and overbearing screens, allowed the male spectator to look at the women on screen. This, in turn, meant that the male spectators fulfilled their scopophilic desires. The seating position in auditoriums was also key, seats all faced the same way, towards the screen. Therefore, once the lights went down the spectator would have no other place to look but at the screen.

Mulvey re-appropriated Jacques Lacan's theorisation of the mirror phrase to understand how film spectator's identify with the characters on screen. Lacan's concept of the mirror phase refers to a time in childhood, where the child learns to recognise themselves in the mirror. However, this recognition can also lead to misrecognition whereby we might see an idealised version of ourselves, or a flawed version. It is this moment of recognition, or misrecognition, that spectators love/hate relationship with how they look develops. Mulvey argues that we as spectators are fascinated 'with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form, and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world' (Mulvey, 1975:8). Mulvey then reappropriates this idea of the love/hate relationship we have with our image and argues that it is played out via the film screen. The screen frames people in a similar manner to the mirror. This allows the spectator to temporarily forget who we are and where we are. Mulvey argues that the film and the screen revert the spectator back to the time before they could recognise themselves. At this point the spectator's attention is drawn, normally, to the male film star on the screen, allowing the spectator to identify with an ideal male on screen (Mulvey, 1975). The spectator then recognises an ideal version of themselves in this image of the male protagonist.

Mulvey also focuses her argument on an implied spectator. For Mulvey it is the text that needs to be examined to establish what positions the spectator is being placed. This in turn, helps Mulvey to understand who it is the spectator is supposed to identify with, and what the power relation behind that form of identification may be. These elements, of positioning and identification opportunities, for Mulvey, have an impact on how a spectator looks at and

engages with the text. Therefore, identification, which leads to recognition, seems to play a vital role in the spectator's engagement with the text. Many of these elements are also intertwined with the physical space in which film is consumed and the solitary feeling a spectator gets from this atmosphere in the auditorium.

There are numerous limitations and assumptions made in the arguments presented which have been addressed by other scholars. The first limitation, and I believe a key limitation to Muvley's work, is the implication that it is men who are in the position of the spectator. This assumption overlooks female spectators, and suggests that women who watch mainstream films, are denied opportunities to look. Therefore, the women are denied pleasure (see Citron, Lesage, Mayne et. al (1978); de Lauretis, 1984; Stacey, 1994). Mulvey (1981), herself attempts to address this limitation of the work in a later article (see section 2.2.1).

Mary Ann Doane also explored the look of the female spectator in her 1982 article 'Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator'. In the article, Doane continues to use psychoanalysis, but focusing on the conception of masquerade, to argue that female spectators can identify as women and still gain pleasure from the cinematic screen. This is in opposition to Mulvey's (1981) arguments who concludes that women become a transvestite spectator and fantasize about being the male protagonist. A key limitation with Doane's theorisation is the need for female spectators to suspend their identity as women. Other limitations of the work are, those like Mulvey, in that the focus is largely on the text and the continued use of psychoanalysis as a framework for the theorisation of ideas.

There have been numerous other critiques and limitations of Mulvey's 1975 article. I briefly outline the studies here, but in the next section, I will focus on key studies in relation to this thesis. Another limitation that has been highlighted by scholars include how the work focussed on the film text and imagined spectators as opposed to actual audiences (Kuhn, 1984; Stacey, 1994). Further to this was the understanding that the implied film spectator is white. In other words, the look and engagement of film spectators who are not white is not considered (hooks 1991; Prasad, 1999). E. Ann Kaplan attempted to respond to the criticism of feminist film theory's focus on white, largely middle-class feminism. It was argued that it neglected to address questions of race and ethnicity (Kaplan, 1997: xi). By examining films produced outside of Hollywood Kaplan found that there are different looking positions represented in the films.

Through the different positions, characters of colour in the films, are not on an equal footing with the looks of white characters. Kaplan argued 'reversing the gaze is not enough (1997:299). The power struggle of objectification remains[xvii]. Both Mulvey and Doane focus on psychoanalytical frameworks to theorise their conceptualisations, other scholars bring in approaches from cultural studies to counter this framework (Gledhill, 1988; hooks, 1991; Stacey, 1994).

2.2.1 Female Spectatorship

In this section I examine and critique, in more detail, many of the studies cited above. The focus of this section, particularly, centres on debates around how female spectator's look, and engagement has been theorised in relation to film. It includes work referring to the female spectator, as the implied audience member, as well as to work referring to female audience members as social subjects.

As stated above, the lack of consideration of how women look and engagement with film is addressed by Mulvey herself. In 1981, as a response to criticisms of her previous article, Mulvey argued that the female spectator can find herself in two positions when she is watching a classical narrative Hollywood film. Either the female spectator can identify with the male characters on screen, or, she 'may find herself so out of key with the pleasure on offer, with its "masculinization," that the spell of fascination is broken' (Mulvey, 1981, in Mulvey, 1989:29). The first position, Mulvey explains in the following manner, 'she [the female spectator] may find herself secretly, unconsciously almost, enjoying the freedom of action and control over the diegetic world that identification with a hero provides' (Mulvey, 1981, in Mulvey, 1989:29). This form of identification allows the female spectator to enjoy the film and gain the power to look, however, they must adapt to the male (patriarchal) role and gaze. They cannot be just women watching a film they must take on another point of view. The second position Mulvey describes is that some female spectators may find that the male point of view on offer in films is something they just cannot relate to or identify with. For those women, the diegetic world of the film falls apart. In other words, because women may refuse to identify with the male perspective offered to them in popular cinema, they are left with no other form of identification that will allow them to take control of the gaze and so give them pleasure. This then makes the diegetic world of the film unrealistic and unbelievable and the illusion is broken (Mulvey, 1981).

Similarly, to Mulvey's 1975 article, discussed above, there are some useful insights in the arguments presented. Again, these insights mostly act as interesting jumping off points from which to consider different factors, that may or may not, impact women's looking and engagement; but there is a great deal here that is also problematic. One element that is useful to consider, which also continues from her earlier article, is the need for the spectator, in this case the female spectator, to be fully focused and entirely concentrating on the screen. This kind of focus and engagement is what allows the spectator to identify with either the passive female character, or, the active male character. There is also the implication that the spectator maintains a way of looking that is long and fixated on the screen. Another element that is useful to consider is the potential of female spectators to be oscillating between different viewing positions. This begins to illustrate, a fluidity and flexibility, to how a viewer may look and engage with media. In other words, it begins to highlight that the way of looking, and the form of engagement, is not fixed throughout the viewing of a film or television programme.

However, one key problematic limitation to this discussion is the idea that women can only identify with the male characters to be active viewers. It is implied that female spectators cannot look at or engage with film as active women. They are restricted to either identifying as a man with the male characters, or they identify as the female character which makes them the object of the look. In other words, women who watch film cannot look at or engage with film *as a woman*. They do not have the power to look because there are no female characters on screen who have the power to look themselves. Therefore, the spectator does not have a character that they can identify with. I offer a further critique of Mulvey's theorisation below alongside Mary Ann Doanes' conception of the female masquerade.

Doane (1982) argues that through the conception of masquerade female spectators could distance themselves enough to gain voyeuristic pleasure. Doane argues that because the female spectator identifies so closely with the female characters on screen, they cannot gain pleasure from a film. With the use of Freudian psychoanalysis, Doane argues that in addition to Mulvey's passive/active binary, another binary should also be considered; that of 'proximity and distance in relation to the image' (Doane, 1982:77). For Doane the distance felt by the female spectator is key to their voyeuristic pleasure. Doane reiterates Christian Metz's argument which states, 'the voyeur…. must maintain a distance between him[/her]self and the image – the cinephile *needs* the gap which represents for him[/her] the very distance between desire and its object' (Doane, 1982:78). In other words, the spectator, whether male or female,

ought to have space between themselves and the images on screen. Doane argues for a different way of reading films which allows the female spectators to resist 'overidentification' and establish the distance between themselves as spectators and them (women) as an object on the screen (Thornham, 1999:112). The distance can be both in terms of the physical space, away from the screen, as well as the separation from the characters on screen. For Doane the idea that women identify with the female characters is problematic. It is this close identification with the image that restricts women from gaining control of the gaze. Doane suggests that women create or 'wear' a mask of femininity to create distance from the characters. This masquerading of womanliness is flexible and can be worn or removed.

On the one hand, Doane's understanding of the masquerade provides a theorisation of how a female spectator can gain pleasure from a film, while maintaining their position as women. However, the theorised frameworks used to ground the conception focus on the sexual pleasure and desire of female spectators. As Thornham (1999) notes, Mulvey and Doane seem to want to offer answers to problems about female spectatorship that occur through the use of psychoanalysis.

A move away from psychanalysis led to frameworks from social sciences. Christine Gledhill (1988), who uses a cultural studies approach, examines how an actual audience can positions themselves within a text. For Gledhill, from a cultural studies perspective at least, there are numerous positions that can be occupied, not simply the single male position argued by Mulvey. However, Gledhill's work again still largely remained focused on the text. Despite Gledhill's focus on the text there is the possibility here of considering other identification approaches that counter Mulvey's theorisations of psychoanalytical identification.

Other work that moved away from psychoanalysis and urged scholars to ground studies in sociological approaches was Annette Kuhn (1984). As well as addressing the need to use other approaches, Kuhn also separated out the problematic idea of the implied spectator. As a starting point, Kuhn discussed melodramas as the focus of many scholarly arguments. Theorists argued that this genre, was specifically aimed at women (Kuhn, 1984); although these films were from a specific time frame (mainly the 1940s) and from Hollywood. Kuhn attempts to bring together the debates around the implied spectator together with studies of actual audiences, which she refers to as the social audience. Kuhn acknowledges that the representations, in these genres, are aimed at a gendered spectatorship; but what does it

mean for actual audiences? Kuhn argues that the theorisations do not go far enough to explain and that the 'spectator and audience are distinct concepts which cannot – as they frequently are – be reduced to one another' (Kuhn, 1984:22). Kuhn highlights that critical work that, has examined melodramas and soap operas, focused on the idea that looking is a gendered process. This notion of the gendered look came from earlier work that used psychoanalysis its base, such as the studies discussed above. The grounding of work in psychoanalysis led to ideas being focused on universalism, and associations with the Oedipus complex (Kuhn, 1984). Kuhn also acknowledges the difficulty, at least through a psychoanalytical framework, of bringing together in one study an examination of the text and the audience, it does not seem compatible; examining the text has different rules, and procedures, than those examining the audience.

Kuhn's article is key to this study in two ways, first, it acknowledges the difference between the spectator and the social audience. The spectator, assumed by Mulvey, Doane and others, is implied and created by the text; while the social audience is the actual physical audience, in auditoriums or in homes. Second, Kuhn brings together discussions of television viewing and spectatorship alongside film viewing and spectatorship. Kuhn, usefully, acknowledges that there can be a spectator of film and television as well as a social audience of both film and television. By acknowledging this difference, as well as bringing the two disciplines of film and television together, Kuhn highlights the need for different theoretical frameworks and methods to be used when examining texts and social audiences. These elements are examined in more detail below (television and its audiences) and in Chapter 3 different methods.

The studies discussed, thus far, have centred on examining spectator positioning in relation to melodramas. E. Ann Kaplan (1983) argues that melodrama represented an alternative to other Hollywood genres like the western and the gangster film (Kaplan, 1983:25). For these, which Kaplan describes as 'highly respected Hollywood genres' (Kaplan, 1983:25), it was 'important that women are excluded from the central role… women and female issues are only central in the family melodrama' (Kaplan, 1983:25). In other words, Kaplan highlights how melodrama came to represent an alternative to placing women in the major roles and by representing female issues that were forgotten or not needed in other genres.

As I have noted above, both Mulvey and Doane rely on psychoanalytical theorisations to ground their ideas. A study that does examine social audiences through a cultural studies' lens

is Jackie Stacey's (1994) research into female film audiences' memories of Hollywood film stars from the 1940s and 1950s. Through her ethnographic research, Stacey provides a different way to consider identification. She concludes that there are two overarching characterisations of how social film audiences identify with film stars; the first form of identification was pleasurable and fantastical, which Stacey (1994) refers to as identification fantasies. The second form of identification, stems from observing similarities between the social audience and the star. Stacey refers to as this second form as identification of practice (Stacey, 1994). Identification fantasies occurred while the social audience is watching the film, therefore, associated with the film viewing experience. There is the suggestion here, that when the social audience watched the film and saw the star in the film many differences between the life of the audience and the star are emphasised. I understand this to refer to the idea that the film can portray a glamorous life of the star that the social audience wants to have. Stacey highlights that under this form of identification the social audience displays aspects of adoration for the film star in many ways. For example, the social audience may display devotion and worship of the star in question, or, the social audience would aspire to be, and be inspired, by the film star. Identification practices, Stacey argues, take place outside the cinema viewing context. Stacey highlights how spectators try to take elements of a film star, and change or attempt, to change themselves in a way that means they become 'more like the star they admire' (Stacey, 1994:159) in their everyday lives. This might mean that the social audience imitate the star, they try to resemble them or pretend to be them in their normal lives.

The two forms of identification highlighted by Stacey indicates that identification for a social audience is not only through recognition. For Stacey, recognition has a small part to play as identification can also involve 'the production of desired identities' (Stacey, 1994:172). In other words, beyond simply recognising elements of ourselves in the film star on screen, which is the main argument of psychoanalytical grounded debates on identification. Stacey concludes that identification continues into the everyday lives and real world as not only do the social audience desire to be like the film star but, also actually act out on these desirable elements of identity. What is key to Stacey's conclusions is the move away from a psychoanalytical understanding of identification, and moving to consider other aspects of a social audiences' personal identity, to understand how they might identify with characters and film stars on screen.

Another suggestion, that comes from Mulvey and Doane's work, is the implied universality of the characterisations that used to describe looking at film, the gaze. Even though it is acknowledged that female spectators can oscillate between positions, there is no attempt to characterise these different positions, the characterisation of the male gaze remained. There is the suggestion, from both Doane and Mulvey, that the female spectators, in the different positions they outline, would look at and engage with film in an elongated, fully focused manner. This, in turn, could imply that the spectators are fully engaged with the film, particularly as the cinema space (the auditorium itself) is also geared towards this form of engagement. In other words: the darkness of the auditorium; the seats all facing in one direction; the size of the screen; as well as the camera positioning; and the characters within the film; all encourage the spectator to look at and engage with the text is an elongated and fully focused manner.

2.2.2 *Darshan* and Film

I want to move away from literature that centres on popular Hollywood films and turn to examine studies focused on popular Hindi language films. The first part of this section will consider work that also refers to the implied spectator, but a spectatorship of popular Hindi language films as opposed to the implied white spectatorship of the studies above. Scholars such as M. M. Prasad (1998), Ravi Vasudevan (2000), Philip Lutgendorf (2006) and Hanna Klien (2013) introduce and examine the concept of *darshan* and film. The debates around *darshan* and film are yet another strand of work conceptualising the look and engagement of film spectators, beyond the white North American and Western European debates. The concept of *darshan* is also pertinent to this study; I consider if it can be a characterisation of looking and/or engaging by Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women. Below, I examine a specific construction of looking and engaging in popular mainstream Hindi language films, *darshan*. Before I continue this discussion, I need to add a note on terms and definitions relating to Indian cinema.

There are numerous phrases used by scholars to refer to popular Hindi language, mostly Mumbai produced, Indian films. For example, Lothar Lutze (1985) used Hindi films as did Shakuntala Banaji (2006/2012). However, in the same book as Lutze, Anil Saari (1985) used popular Indian film (shortened to Indian Pop-film). Anjali Ram (2014) uses the phrase popular Indian cinema. The most common is probably Bollywood, used by many, not only in academia but also in the wider world, as a synonym to refer to all Indian cinema. Jigna Desai, Rajinder

Dudrah and Amit Rai (2005) use the term Bollywood as a shorthand to refer specifically to popular Hindi-Urdu language films. Desai, Dudrah and Rai (2005: 81) argue that many of the films considered to be under the Bollywood umbrella are not simply Hindi language films. They assert that Urdu is commonly used in Hindi films and is understood as 'the meta-language of romantic love in film culture'. However, there are various issues with the use of the term Bollywood. First, as stated above the term implies there is only one kind of film that comes from India. There are many different cinemas in India such as the popular regional language films made in and around various urban centres of film, such as Chennai (producing Tamil films), Hyderabad (producing Telugu language films), and Kolkata (producing Bengali language films) (Prasad, 2003 and Dudrah and Desai, 2008). Bollywood is also a term that has been used more in recent years that mostly refer to films that have gained notoriety outside the South Asian subcontinent (Dudrah & Desai, 2008). There is an assumption that the term dismisses or overlooks the history of popular Hindi language films, particularly the successful films of the 1950s onwards. Finally, Prasad (2003) also points to the connotations of comparisons that are made between Hollywood and Bollywood. This comparison through a north American and western Euro-centric viewpoint, places Bollywood as the 'other' to a more sophisticated art form.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will be using the term popular Hindi language films. This phrase will refer to mainstream commercial films, that are mostly, in Hindi with elements of Urdu and English. The films, referred to with this phrase, have mostly been produced in Mumbai, and includes films from the early decades of Mumbai film production, through to the present day. In direct quotes I shall use the terminology used by the writer.

Coming back to the concept of *darshan*, I want to begin by examining literature that focuses on the religious connotation of *darshan,* and how this form is presented in film. In the introduction to the thesis I briefly mentioned the work of Lawrence Babb (1981). This is one of the earliest analysis of *darshan* in film. Babb analysed a scene from the 1975 film *Jai Santoshi Maa*. Coming from an anthropological perspective Babb hoped to gain an understanding of what it is some Hindus, who practice this form of worship, believe is happening when they take *darshan*. This meant that his analysis was text based, and read through a directorial lens. It provides spectators with an insight into what might be happening when *darshan* is being given and taken. Babb's analysis provides initial insight into some of the conventions used by film makers to present opportunities of *darshan* on screen. Babb explains how a full frontal

shot of the image of the deity is key to the construction as presenting the deity in such a way that can allow for viewers to exchange looks and receive blessings. These full-frontal shots of the deity are intercut with points of view shots from the deity's perspective, giving the viewer a glimpse as to what may be happening from the deity's side of the exchange. The shots from the deity's perspective show the devotees looking up at the image as well as characters dancing in the background. There are two elements here that seem to be key to the construction of *darshan*, first the full-frontal framing of the image of the deity, and second the intercutting between shots of the deity and the devotees.

Full frontal framing and positioning, where the figure faces outward, has been a feature in many visual forms. Studies that have examined various genres of India's performance and visual culture highlight, how frontality became a key aesthetic convention, in disciplines such as folk theatre and fine art, from the colonial period in the 1800s to modern times (Prasad, 1998:18). In other words, frontality or full-frontal framing features conventions can be found in north Indian visual culture such as sculpture and painting traditions. Rajput paintings also used full frontal framing and blended it together with Mughal traditions, which were heavily influential.

Another convention found in painting and later print, as well as moving image media, is the repeated use of iconography and objects. Geeta Kapur (1987:80) states that frontality featured 'forms of direct address; flat diagrammatic and simply profiled figures; a figure ground pattern with only notational perspective; repetition of motifs in terms of ritual 'play'; and a decorative mise-en-scene'. In, which later influenced, frontal framing was mostly in profile because of the flat, two-dimensional perspective.

The positioning of figures facing outward continued to be a convention in printing. Chromolithography[xviii], allowed mass-produced images, mostly of Hindu deities and scenes from north Indian Sanskrit based Hindu texts, to gain in popularity from around 1857 (Jain, 2005). The availability of such prints enabled anyone, and everyone, to possess images of their chosen deity, or deities, and place them in their homes. This allowed full-frontal framing to become a common aesthetic amongst the mass north Indian Hindu population.

The full-frontal convention, and an audience's' familiarity with it, could also be found in theatre traditions as well as in film made before 1975. Ashish Rajadhyaksha (1987),

Christopher Pinney (2002) and Kajri Jain (2005) highlight the connection between the aesthetic of prints and calendar art to the films of D. G Phalke. Many of the early directors of films in India have previously worked in other media and were familiar with the full-frontal framing aesthetic. Jain argues that 'there was a direct connection [between printing and cinema]: one of Phalke's many jobs… was as a lithographic transfer artist at the Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press... producing popular chromolithographic prints on mythological, historical an iconic subjects' (Jain, 2005:74). Meaning that the experience Phalke gained from working as a printer, influenced his aesthetic in films, such as *Raja Harishchandra* (1913). However, although the scholars point to the influence of printing in terms of colour, framing, costume in Phalke's aesthetic, there is no discussion of how framing may or may not relate to *darshan*.

The relationship between frontality and *darshan* in performance may be found by examining Parsi theatre. Performers in Parsi theatre groups, often, presented themselves to audiences by directly facing them. Anuradha Kapur (1993:92) argues that the full-frontal position 'of the performer [in Parsi theatre] indicated a specific relationship between viewer and actor. Turning the body towards the spectator is a sign that there is in this relationship no dissembling between the two: the actor looks at the audience and the audience looks at the actor; both exist – as actor and audience – because of this candid look'. In other words, unlike other theatre practices, performers in Parsi theatre, break the imaginary fourth wall. Actors look at, and engage with, the audience during performances. Even though Parsi theatre was performed in a proscenium setting, which encourages performers to imagine the audience it not there, they prefer to use conventions from earlier forms of performance that allow full frontal positioning to occur. Therefore, audiences of Parsi theatre understand that if an actor turns to face them, looks out towards them from the stage and are presented with a frontal image of the actor, they know they are to engage with the actor and return their look. This is not breaking of the fourth wall, in the Brechtian sense, found in North American and European theatre traditions. It is more of a continuation of performance practices found in south Asia, particularly, in north Indian Hindu traditions of visual culture such as those highlighted above.

Photography also had an impact on film aesthetics. Geeta Kapur (1987) highlights the link of frontal framing to *darshan* in her analysis of the 1937 film *Sant Tukaram*. Kapur argues that 'there is a transfer of effect by a frontal contact with all the implied qualities of such a relationship: the film for instance succeeds in transmitting a non-voyeuristic gaze as also the alertness and dignity of sacred protocol' (1987:86). In other words, Kapur acknowledges that

when the actor playing the role of Tukaram is presented through a frontal frame, the viewer is familiar with the connotations of such positioning, in that it signals to them that this character is the object of *darshan*. The impact of this non-voyeuristic looking relationship provides the object of *darshan* with the power. The viewer is encouraged to submit themselves to the actor playing the role of the deity, like they would do in a temple setting and were seeking *darshan* from an image of a deity there. Kapur also explains the performative aspects of *darshan* on film by stating young boys are trained, through Sanskrit performance traditions, to talk and act like a deity. Hence, highlighting that there is a historical association of normal people (normally men) taking on roles as Hindu gods, demons and other religious figures like *sants* and gurus. Through the relationship actors that portrayed Hindu deities on film, were thought to be the actual deities themselves. Dwyer and Patel (2002) argue that by placing film actors in moments that mimic the darshanic gaze they are lifted to a position to that of a deity. 'The star frequently appears in tableau scenes that seem to invite *darshan*, thus hierarchizing the look and giving the stars associations with the traditional granters of *darshan*, notable kings and gods' (Dwyer & Patel, 2002:33). Philip Lutgendorf (1995) explained that a tableau scene or moment, within a film or television programme, is when the camera pauses on a full frontal shot of either an image of deity or on an actor playing the role of a deity. This tableau moment would most often occur at the climax of key scenes within the text. The implication to the power relations of Dwyer and Patel acknowledgement is that the actor and the object of *darshan* have the power over the viewer/spectator. Very different from Mulvey's understanding of the spectator having the power over the look.

I have stated above, full frontal framing allows looks to be exchanged between the characters (often the deity) and the spectator. This position thus also uses another darshanic convention where the eyes are the focus of the image. The importance and emphasis of the eyes in some Hindu visual cultures was discussed in the introduction (see Fuller, 2004 and Klein, 2013). The ability to see the eyes allows blessings or other emotions to be given and taken by characters and spectators.

The studies by Geeta Kapur and Anuradha Kapur, as well as those by Lutze (1985) and Saari (1985), highlight the long history and influence of high caste Sanskrit based Hindu mythology on film, as well as, other visual forms. The influence of frontality can be seen in not only the aesthetic, where full frontal framing and positioning of characters is key, but also in terms of narrative as well. For example, Lutze (1985) explains that films either adapted the narrative of

Hindu mythologies into film directly to produce devotional and religious films. Lutze highlighted how a film such as *Muqqaddar Ka Sikander* (1978, *Conqueror of Destiny*) mimicked the characters and narrative from Hindu mythologies about Krishna. The mimicking of the characters and narratives allowed a connection to be made between everyday characters and deities they metaphorically represent. Above, Dwyer and Patel already highlight that actors were seen as gods because of the roles they played in early films, here Lutze (1985) and Saari (1985) also highlight that non-religious characters are also presented as deities.

The literature reviewed above has focused on the presentation of *darshan* in film in its religious sense. The discussion below begins to examine the relationship between *darshan*, ideology, and hegemony. In other words, the literature highlights deeper readings of placing *darshan* in texts and explores the intersection of *darshan* with power and politics. Terms, such as ideology and hegemony are complex, which need context and definition. Here I explain what conceptions I use through the thesis for these terms, which will not only allow the discussion below to be understood better, but the remainder of the thesis as well.

Ideology has been used by many to refer to a variety of areas, from thinking about identity, to framing a groups ideas and beliefs, to helping a political group legitimise their ideas and values (Eagleton, 1991). Some of these definitions coincide and are interlinked; while some are simply stand alone (Eagleton, 1991). In this thesis I use ideology as understood by Althusser (1971). For Althusser ideology 'is largely unconscious and always institutional' (Eagleton, 1991:155) and it is not necessarily focused on distinguishing what ideas and beliefs are true or false. In other words, institutions, such as religious, state or family, present their ideology to people that helps them understand who they are, where they fit into the world and how to navigate the world. The ideologies these institutions present will be done in a manner that promotes and legitimises their beliefs to form a notion of truth. At the same time, the same institutions will also be promoting false ideas and beliefs about opposing and/or minority groups and institutions to maintain dominance. An example of this is the ideology of the Hindu right, who promote the idea of India being a Hindu nation. This is legitimised by reframing history and using religion, and other institutions, to perpetuate and disseminate these ideas to the wider public. At the same time, the Hindu right promote falsehoods about other groups (for example Muslims) and institutions (the Congress party).

Althusser's understanding of ideology also moves away from abstract thought. Instead for Althusser ideology 'is a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in a society' (Eagleton, 1991: 18). That is to say that Althusser's refers to ideology as the ideas and beliefs that people live by in their everyday life. As stated above these are largely unconscious ideologies that are produced by institutions stated above. By following, negotiating, and/or resisting ideologies put forward by dominant groups and institutions, people become, as stated above, 'social subjects'.

The combination of different institutions presenting ideas and beliefs that help them maintain dominance can be understood through the concept of hegemony. This understanding of hegemony was considered by Antonio Gramsci (1971) who 'uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to rule from those it subjugates - though it is true that he occasionally uses the term to cover both consent and coercion together' (Eagleton, 1991:112). In other words, dominant groups present ideas, values, beliefs to the masses (the subordinate classes) as common sense thus allowing them to be more palatable and is seen as giving consent. However, the dominant ideologies that allow the dominant institutions to maintain power do not remain static. They are in constant flux and evolving, which means that the relationship between the institutions and those it subjugates is changing as well (Sturken and Cartwright, 2017). This in turn leads to the institutions to continually state and re-state their ideas and beliefs.

One strategy used by dominant institutions to continually project their ideas and beliefs is through interpellation. Sturken and Cartwright (2017) explain how media scholars inf the 1970s turned to Althusser and his understanding of ideology (as discussed above) to help comprehend how media texts can interpellate or hail audiences. The process of interpellation, according to Sturken and Cartwright (2017) refers to the way in which a viewer (an audience member) feels as if they are being called out to, they are being 'hailed'. This process relies upon the viewer knowing who they are and what social groups they belong to. These groups share codes and conventions which are then placed in the images and can be read by those in the group, therefore the entire audience is not 'hailed'. I discuss the ways in which the Hindu right interpellate audiences of serials in Chapter 4, but below I discuss the concept in more detail in relation to films.

The deification of male characters in popular Hindi language films perpetuates not only religious but also patriarchal and class-based hierarchies. M. M. Prasad (1999) argued that the visuals of popular Hindi language cinema can be used to persuade and interpellate spectators. Prasad uses the term interpellation in the Althussarian sense, '[b]y responding to the call of the state to identify him/herself, the subject is interpellated or 'recruited' by the Symbolic' (Prasad, 1999:10). In other words, a higher power, such as the state or a religious body (Symbolic) embed an ideological meaning within, in this case, the film text. But for the spectators to embrace this ideology there needs to be some aspect of the ideology that they can identify with. For example, feudal family romances of the 1950s and 1960s, borrow conventions from *darshan*, such as full-frontal framing, to place male protagonists in the films in deified positions. Prasad refers to this as the darshanic gaze and argued that the spectator watching these feudal family romances is not positioned in the same way as they are in American (Hollywood) melodramas. Spectators of Hollywood melodrama occupy 'an isolated, individualised position of voyeurism coupled with identification with a figure in the narrative' (Prasad, 1998:74). Mulvey's theorisation of the spectators' position is one that relies on being a lone viewer of a film. This secluded position is emphasised through the darkened auditorium, the seats facing in the same direction and the large screen, points I have discussed above. It is through this isolation that a voyeuristic look is encouraged, and the only form of identification open to them is with the male protagonist. Prasad highlights the privileging of a voyeuristic look in popular Hollywood films, the implication being that this way of looking is encouraged throughout. While in popular Hindi language films a voyeuristic look is given mostly through song and dance sequences. Prasad also notes the influence of the cinema space which encourages the voyeuristic look. Similarly, many of the cinema spaces in which popular Hindi language films are consumed also have an impact on the kind of looking that can occur) I discuss this in more detail below).

This darshanic construction of visuals differed from Mulvey's theorisations in two ways. First, the construction of *darshan* contradicts voyeuristic tendencies because the object that the look is directed towards 'gives itself to be seen and in so doing confers privilege upon the spectator' (Prasad, 1998:76). In the context within which Prasad describes *darshan*, the power of the look is held by the object of the look. It is the object of the *darshan* that permits the looker to see them and so the looker benefits from 'this permission, in contrast to a concept of looking that assigns power to the beholder by reducing the image to an object of the look' (Vasudevan, 2000:139). In many cases it is assumed that the object of the darshanic look is a

figure of high status and the idea that the spectator can look at them is a privilege. As Prasad stated 'the object of the darshanic gaze is a superior, a divine figure or a king who presents himself as a spectacle of dazzling splendour to his subjects, the '*praja*' or people' (Prasad, 1999:76), or in the case of the feudal family romance it is the male protagonist/hero of the film or high caste family members (mostly male characters) that are objects of the darshanic gaze. Second, the darshanic gaze contradicts and differs from psychoanalytical theorisations of looking. The difference is focused on who the spectator identifies with while watching the film and how the identification is formed. According to Prasad, in the darshanic relationship, the spectator cannot identify with the superior figure and so an imaginary identification cannot occur. 'In imaginary identification, we imitate the other at the level of resemblance – we identify ourselves with the image of the other inasmuch as we are "like him"' (Zizek 1989 in Prasad, 1998:76). Mulvey and other psychoanalytical film theorists, imaginary identification the male spectator would see the male protagonist or other male character and identify with them. A female spectator would see the female lead, or other female character, and identify with them because they are like each other. However, through the darshanic gaze, this cannot happen because the object of the gaze, the object that has the power, is superior. Prasad argues that the spectator then identifies through the symbolic order. This means that the spectator identifies with the character on who the privilege of looking has been given. To simplify, if a film presents an image of a king the spectator would be placed in the position of a character in the crowd and it is with the crowd that the spectator will identify. In the case of the feudal family romance, the male protagonist would be presented through the conventions of *darshan* and the spectator would identify with, perhaps the female protagonist who has placed the male protagonist in the position of the object as her *darshan*.

There are three intertwined power relations at work through Prasad's conceptualisation of *darshan* in the feudal family romances. These are based around caste, gender and politics. First, I will consider the caste-based power relations. The characters that are positioned as the object of the darshanic gaze are figures of authority and most of the time from high caste backgrounds. Prasad (1999:77-78) argued that '[i]n the Hindi film, the gaze is mobilized according to the rules of hierarchical despotic public spectacle in which the political subjects witness and legitimize the splendour of the ruling class'. This then implies that in many of the romance Hindi language films, of the 1950s and 1960s, the power lies with the male protagonist, who was from a north Indian Hindu Brahmin (or other upper) caste, families. It further suggests that characters from lower castes would not be the object of the darshanic

look and therefore not have the power. For spectators, depending on their background, they would identify with either the object of *darshan*. The high caste male, through Prasad's understanding of imaginary identification. While the lower caste spectators would identify with the looker who seeks *darshan* through symbolic identification. These assumed positions[xix] do not allow the spectators to oscillate between positions in the same manner Mulvey described female spectators may do between male and female characters. Without the fluid movement between positions at this time alienation of spectators could occur along caste-based structures.

Second, the gendered power relation, although *darshan* in its religious context can be given and taken by anyone from both genders, the darshanic gaze construction in film is very different. Prasad argued that in the feudal family romances the darshanic gaze is a gendered look and mirrors the patriarchal ideology found in north Indian, high caste Hindu culture and society. Prasad (1998:76) suggested (via Vasudevan) that 'Hindi film combines two modes of representation, as such it can include scenes of voyeuristic fixing of the female figure as object'. However, during the song and dance sequences, the camera moves away from simply representing 'male on male position' (Prasad, 1998:76) as highlighted by Mulvey. Instead, Prasad argues, the full-frontal framing that is presented to spectators during the song and dance sequences moves the privilege away from the male on male identification and allows the female character to be the object of the darshanic gaze in these scenes.

Finally, there is the political ideological power relations that underscores the construction of darshanic gaze and its positioning of characters and spectators. Prasad (1998) argued that the use of the darshanic gaze is a way to interpellate a singular, homogenous point of view to spectators. Again, focusing on the feudal family romance, Prasad argued how the films embraced a political view of Indian being an open and secularised society. The ideology that was championed by the ruling elite of the day, the Congress Party. The party's outlook stems from the north Indian Hindu high caste, urban educated middle classes who dominated political institutions during the early years of India's independence (Rajagopal, 2001). The Congress Party focused on a modern outlook for the nation with the understanding that India is an inclusive and tolerant society.

The construction of *darshan*, and its appropriation towards non-religious figures, has been argued to have been used to educate spectators, of popular Hindi language film, into moving

into a more modern culture and society. Ravi Vasudevan (2000) argues that after independence was granted to India there was a concerted effort to educate the population and introduce modern ideas. One strategy used was to mimic *darshan* in films and apply it in the same way Prasad outlined above, towards non-religious, high caste male characters. The idea or reasoning being, according to Vasudevan, was that the government could introduce new ideas to the masses through a medium they are familiar with as well as through an aesthetic they are used to seeing and engaging with. Vasudevan refers to this, as transitional cinema, this strategy was commonly found in the films just after India's independence, as the country transitioned into becoming a nation.

Unlike Prasad, Vasudevan explains the impact of music in scenes where the darshanic gaze is constructed. For Vasudevan the object of the darshanic gaze is kept at a distance from the spectator and is not always presented in a full-frontal frame. Vasudevan argues, that with devotional singing, images of a devotee and the image of the object of devotion are used to create a scene of non-traditional worship. This construction of the darshanic gaze is synonymous with the *bhakti*, the devotional Hindu tradition, a form of worship that is open to everyone. Vasudevan explains that the reconfiguration of the darshanic gaze into a devotional act 'becomes a somewhat excessive one, concentrating greater attention on the devotee than the devotional object' (Vasudevan, 2000:147). In other words, the emphasis of the scene changes to focus more on the character seeking *darshan*. The spectator is also placed in the same position as the character seeking *darshan*. Thus, the image encourages identification with the position that does not have the power in this looking relation. Through the analysis of a scene from the film *Pyaasa* (Craving, 1957), Vasudevan shows how the director uses *mise-en-scène* and music to convey Gulab's (the female protagonist) longing for Vijay (the male protagonist).

Audience members would be familiar with being kept at a distance from the object of devotion/*darshan*. It would be a practice familiar to them when in a temple setting. During busy periods, particularly during a festival, the devotee is (normally) seated some distance away from, but in front of, the deity. These moments of *darshan* are commonly accompanied by devotional singing, like the way Vasudevan describes above. In a similar way, a distance is also created in a cinema auditorium between the film spectator (devotee) and the object of their devotion, namely the film actor on screen.

The use of *darshan* and the darshanic gaze offer spectators other ways to identify with the characters and narrative. What I mean by this is that in these, religious and family romance films, identification is not grounded in psychoanalysis. Rather it is grounded in religion and culture. 'The darshanic gaze is not static, and generates new sources of authority from it, and in ways not entirely comprehensible in terms of established conventions' (Vasudevan, 2000:140). In other words, the camera moves the audiences into various positions within the actions that are taking place on the screen. These positions may not necessarily follow the standard conventions of the narrative of the media in question. Vasudevan argues that 'it is not necessary that characters abide by the positions they are assigned by it [the darshanic gaze], nor that film techniques subordinate the spectator to the sway of darshanic authority' (Vasudevan, 2000:139). In film or television, the position of characters changes and is in flux. For example, lower caste characters may find themselves in a position where they are the object of the darshanic gaze to an even lower caste character. This, in turn, places the spectator or television viewer in flux. They watch the film or television programme from multiple perspectives so enabling multiple identifications. This differs from the feminist psychoanalytic point of view whereby the only identification for any spectator or viewer is with the male/ heroic characters.

The readings offered, in these studies, suggest a preferred understanding of the text, not just in terms of how the scenes of *darshan* are understood but also how the texts are comprehended. Jigna Desai (2004) offered an insight into how the construction of *darshan*, in a film or TV programme, might be perceived by an audience member, specifically a diasporic audience member. Through the analysis of a scene from the film *Masala* (*Spices*, 1991). Using Stuart Hall's conceptualisation of encoding/decoding, Desai argued that 'negotiated or resistant diasporic spectatorships may challenge the narrative of longing and belonging, opposing, resisting and in *Masala*, literally talking back to the films' (Desai, 2004: 108). In other words, the representations of diaspora, in films like *Masala*, suggested that diasporic audiences could defy institutions like religion, to the point they answer back and become active. Desai refers to the use of a VHS recorded by the character Shanti in the film. Shanti uses a VHS recording of a religious serial as part of her daily religious practices. However, as the narrative of the film progresses and the family become in need of the deity's help, Shanti becomes aware of the impotency of the deity (Desai, 2004). This changes the relationship between the deity and Shanti, and Desai argues that through resistance and negotiation the diasporic audience members (represented by Shanti) come to control the institution. In the

film the control is presented in a literal sense, as Shanti pauses the video whenever she pleases (Desai 2004). The construction in the film are 'satirical portrayals of the god Krishna' thus, leading characters and the spectators of the film to read the opportunity of *darshan* to be negotiated and even resisted[xx].

The section so far has discussed how *darshan* is constructed in popular Hindi language cinema. The genres of films that have been the focus of the discussions has been religious film and what Prasad refers to as feudal family romances from the 1950s and 1960s. The analysis highlights many conventions used to construct *darshan* in film and how these conventions are applied to non-religious characters, who in turn are deified themselves. In the section I also highlight the various, yet intertwined, power relations between caste, gender, and politics, that are embedded in the films.

The discussion of *darshan* offers an alternative way of considering how film spectators, particularly Indian Hindu film audiences, may watch film. However, there are some aspects that are problematic in terms of the inequality of power the look allows, particularly when the look is directed towards non-religious characters. *Darshan* is synonymous with a way of looking through the Hindu religious context, and therefore has left the looks or visual understandings of audiences of other religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism unacknowledged. This is not a coincidence, as explained above the construction of *darshan* has been appropriated by the state to initially project an image of the nation that was in opposition to the colonial past. But also, the Hindu far right have also used the construction of *darshan* to promote a restrictive and idealised image of India that is inherently Hindu. Over the last three decades the Hindu far right have pushed a homogenised image of India and Indians as being a Hindu that follows North Indian, Sanskrit text-based traditions, which adheres to Brahmanical and caste-based hierarchies. Shakuntala Banaji (2018) explains some of the strategies that are used by the Hindu right, wherein re-appropriating *darshan* is one element of this. Banaji explains that 'Hindutva communication cannibalises and harnesses the tactics and vocabularies of anti-terrorism, anti-imperialism digitisation and development, as well as of older Hindu scopic regimes from painting and calendar art to folk theatre and cinema (Jain 2007 in Banaji, 2018:338). This leads to non-Hindu and low caste members of the Indian community to be portrayed as non-Indian or outsiders and more dangerously as 'a threat to the nation and the state, [and simply seen as] citizens only in a "minority" sense'

(Banaji, 2018:334). Using *darshan* and other religious rituals and practices have been used to incite violence against non-Hindus and low caste communities.

There is a danger here that the discussions above seem to imply two universal ideas. First that the visual aesthetics of popular Hindi language film and the construction of *darshan* is the same in all forms of cinema in India; and second, that *darshan* is the only way of looking and engaging that appears in popular Hindi language films. I do not have the space here to examine these works and ideas in detail, but I do recognise they need to be highlighted. In terms of visual aesthetics in other forms of Indian cinema, Sara Dickey's (1993) study provides insights into the visual and aural construction of popular Tamil language films, that are mostly produced in and around Chennai. Rashmi Sawhney (2010) argues for a move away from overarching national cinema debates in film studies. By focusing on popular Hindi language films, it takes attention away from marginalised films such as those produced by the Chharas community and niche genres such as documentary. Sawhney (2007) also draw attention to the aesthetics of films made by female film directors in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There is some borrowing from Islam in popular Hindi language films. Woodman Taylor (2002) and Philip Lutgendorf (2006) both discuss the concept of *nazar* (glance).[xxi] The studies examined above, focus on how *darshan* is constructed within the text, and how these constructions can be read by an implied spectator. In the next section, I want to examine the reception of such visuals by actual audiences.

2.2.3 Studies of Indian Film Audiences

Films that are considered religious, devotional, or mythological did lead audiences to react to representations of deities on screen. Pfleiderer (1985a:99), citing Barnouw and Krishnaswamy (1964), highlights that when the early films were screened 'people were observed to prostrate themselves in front of the screen.' What is helpful about the observations, is that they emphasis and point towards physical responses by audience members to representations of deities on screen. However, the reactions were only observed in relation to religious popular Hindi language films, nor do the observations specify exactly what kind of image or shot provoked such responses. There is room to consider that the reactions could have taken place at any time during the film and not necessarily when the deity is presented in a full-frontal frame, and in a tableaux scene. The observations were also made only during the very early years of film exhibition in India.

Prasad and Vasudevan argued above that non-religious characters are presented through a darshanic lens in non-religious films, therefore can other genres of film also lead to physical reactions to the characters. Pfleiderer (1985a:105) did highlight that religious films do 'provoke religious or pseudo-religious behaviour among its audiences; [but also] films of the category 'social' definitely cover religious needs on a secular level'. Similarly, to Barnouw and Krishnaswamy above, Pfleiderer does not specify exactly what kind of scenes can provoke a reaction, or, what kind of behaviour unfolds amongst the audience. However, Pfleiderer links the religious connotations to her knowledge of pilgrimage, and argued that audience members understand films to represent a version of the world, which Pfleiderer calls 'as-it-should-be' (Pfleiderer, 1985a: 108). This is an ideal reality that is orderly and morally correct. For some of Pfleiderers' participants the acts of the characters in social films, that are set in idealised realities, are sacred acts. Therefore, for the participants to agree or learn from such acts is sacred. Pfleiderer's study helps to understand that audiences in the past have responded to image of deities, despite not knowing if these were at specific tableaux, full frontal moments. The study also provides a backdrop to understanding how audiences can read film narratives and characters in social or non-religious situations. The implication of Pfleiderers' findings are that even if a film might not be a religious film, they are still made sense of through a religious lens. A factor Pfleiderer does consider in relation rural audiences of popular Hindi language films.

Pfleiderers' study above, centred on participants in an urban/semi-urban setting, Delhi and its surrounding areas. The participants were from various castes and classes, predominately from north India (one family were originally from south India). To assume that the conclusions of Pfleiderers' study are the same all over India would be incorrect. Pfleiderer herself also conducted a study in rural villages across north India. She concluded that rural audiences filter and then make sense of narratives and characters through the religious texts which they are most familiar with. Pfleiderer argued that this was because the major forms of entertainment the villagers were used to were 'mostly social and religious functions. They have their festivals, their pilgrimages, their Ram Lila. They have Holi and Diwali. They have their weddings. Once in a while, a *Nautanki* group or a *Svang* comes through and performs traditional folk drama' (Pfleiderer, 1985:59). Pfleiderer is implying that it is the socio-cultural situation the participants of her rural study are in that guide them to make meaning of the films they see.

The socio-economic position of an audience member can also have impact on how they understand a film. Dickey (1993) argued that audience members can identify fantastical elements in the films which allows them to escape the reality of their own lives. The audience seem to relate, and recognise, their life goals through the films – whether it be becoming richer that can help with their problems to marrying the person of their dreams and desires. Dickey's research provides an understanding of why audiences watch films and what aspects of the text itself they find pleasurable. Shankuntala Banaji (2006/2012), talking to female construction workers at a cinema auditorium in a poor neighbourhood in Mumbai, also cited that they liked to see the buildings. 'We work making all these [buildings], sometimes we want to see what they look like inside' (Banajii, 2006/2012:39). These studies have largely focused on audiences of popular films, whether they were in Tamil or in Hindi. It is difficult to understand the reasons why people go to watch other kinds of films in different spaces.

There are many other audiences which I do not have the space to examine here. For example, Ravi Vasudevan (2016) draws attention to audiences of niche films, exhibited in spaces he describes as 'B' and 'C' circuit cinemas. These cinemas screen a variety of films including soft pornography. He also considers, audiences who watched film in their own home either through the broadcasting of films on Doordarshan and later specialised film channels such as B4U or Zee Cinema; or VHS tapes and later DVD or VCDs which were obtained either legally or illegally. S. V. Srinivas (1996) examined fans and fan clubs set up in honour of the South Indian Telugu actor Chiranjeevi. Srinivas explains how fans and their clubs initially are devoted to the actor in question but once the actor enters politics as many do, the role of the clubs becomes politically charged. Rashmi Sawhney (2010) in her chapter about films made by the Chharas community in India, highlights how this marginalised group of people do not have distribution or exhibition outlets. Instead they burn DVDs and hand them out to all who are interested (Sawhney 2010). Many of the films made by the Chharas community are documentaries. A genre of film many Indians do not pay to view, although occasionally they are shown at film festivals, films clubs and at universities (Sawhney, 2010).

Vasudevan (2016) and Sawhney (2010) reveal the various spaces in which film is watched; they highlight the multiple and different venues available to film audiences within India. Venues can range from single screen art deco cinema halls to open air mobile cinemas; from large tent cinemas to watching films at home to multiplexes. During the first few decades of the twentieth century, films were screened in large temporary structures, from tents set up near

villages, to open air spaces with room for a portable screen (Mahadevan 2010). In some urban settings, there were some permanent structures where films were screened but this was not the sole purpose of the building, they were also used as dance halls (Srinivas 2012). Later more permanent structures were built, specifically for screening films. Up until the late 1990s, single screen auditoriums were where most people, at least in urban areas, in India went to watch films whether they were popular Hindi language films or the latest Hollywood blockbuster.

Urban centres across India play host to numerous single screen cinema halls, each specialising in a kind of cinema and/or audience. Here, I want to discuss the number of cinemas and the kinds of films they screen and below I will discuss the audiences who attend the various screenings. Lakshmi Srinivas (2012) identified that cinemas halls in the south Indian city of Bangalore screened not only popular Hindi language films but also films made within the state (which are in Kannadian language); as well as films in Tamil from Tamil Nadu, Telugu from Andhra Pardesh and Malayalam from Kerala. Amit Rai (2002 and 2009) stated that at the time of his research there were 13 cinemas across the north Indian city of Bhopal. Ten of which are within the old city walls, where there is a majority Muslim population, and three in the newer parts of the city, the latter implying that certain demographics of society would be regular attendees at those cinemas. Dickey (1993) noted that majority of the people attend screenings at cinemas they could get to by walking or sometimes by bus. The number of cinemas in a city is important because it begins to highlight that going to the cinema seemed to be a somewhat segregated activity. The cinemas were set in specific neighbourhoods and residents of those areas would attend the screenings. Locating the cinemas within or close to neighbourhoods also meant that the audiences did not need to spend money on transportation, an additional cost they may be able to cover. Dickey's participants were from lower class backgrounds. Both points, location of and travel to the cinema, underscore the class-based nature of cinema going in India.

Another factor that emphasises the class difference in cinema auditoriums are the different seating arrangements on offer. S. V. Srinivas (2000), although discussing auditoriums of the 1940s and 1950s, identified there could be five classes film audiences could pick from. This started with the cheapest, what Srinivas termed as 'floor class', right the way through to 'Reserved or Box class' (2000:2). Each of the classes would offer the audience members varying levels of comfort, from sitting on the floor with little to no ventilation, to sitting on benches directly under a fan to sitting on a sofa under a fan (Srinivas, 2000). Many of the

classes were still available into the latter part of the twentieth century and into the 21st century as highlighted by Dickey (1993), Banaji (2006/2012) and Srinivas (2012). The seating arrangements imply that there is a class and caste-based hierarchy embedded into the cinema space. Banaji (2006/2012) referred to how the different food stalls and the condition of the cinema auditorium is signal of variances of class. Banaji (2006/2012:38) describes the *Shaan* cinema auditorium as 'less well-heeled… almost 25 years old and the upholstery shows it,' thus attracting a lower class and caste to the venue. Meanwhile 'the cold air and hot popcorn of the *PVR Anupam* [cinema in Delhi] corresponds to the atmosphere to be experienced at a new theatre like *Movietime* in Malad, Bombay' appealed to more wealthy audience members. However, many middle class and suburban patrons have abandoned single screen cinema auditoriums altogether for multiplexes, which I discuss in more detail below.

In each section of seating on offer in the auditoriums, there is an area that is sectioned off to provide a space for women to sit separately from men. S. V. Srinivas (2000) highlighted this in their research an overt implication that going to watch a film in a cinema is largely a male pursuit. The frequency of women attending the cinema varied depending on where they lived and their class, caste background. Pfleiderer (1985) noted that the women in the villages where she conducted her research never went to the local towns to watch a film, while the men would go occasionally. More recently Banaji (2006/2012:39) found female construction workers from central areas of Maharashtra attended a screening a couple of times a month but men in the community attended twice a week. Srinivas (2012) noted that many women she spoke to from a middle class urban background 'never go to the theater [sic] on their own and one rarely sees women, especially middle class women unaccompanied at theaters [sic] (Derné, 2000 cited in Srinivas 2012:88). The implication of the observations suggest that traditional roles are still maintained and a public space, such as the cinema, is the domain of men. During the early years of film exhibition, it was noted that audiences were largely made up of men (ICC I: 560 cited in Dwyer, 2006:27). Dwyer also noted that later the viewing practices changing, in that audiences moved away from large cinema auditoriums to more intimate settings in family homes and/or friends (Dwyer, 2006:163).

Watching films in an auditorium in many parts of India is very different to watching films in an auditorium in the UK or US. Pfleiderer (1985) provided some insight into how watching a film in India might differ from North American and European practices. The assumption being that, in auditoriums screening popular Hollywood films, audiences experience the film individually

and quietly. But this is not necessarily how the various kinds of films being shown across India are viewed. Referring to the ethnography conducted in rural villages, Pfleiderer stated that men in the audience would react verbally to the arrival of the villain on screen or the female protagonist. Pfleiderer highlighting that there is an interactive element to watching some genres of Indian films.

It would be incorrect to assume that the verbal was just an occurrence in rural settings as Lakshmi Srinivas (1998 & 2002) identified many participatory elements in her research of South Indian film goers. Srinivas refers to acts such as the audience clapping at the start and end of a film, as well as whistling at the during dance sequences (Srinivas 1998). Other participatory acts include shouting at the screen, 'If the hero and heroine are fleeing from the villain, viewers shout out "Run! Run faster!"' (Srinivas, 1998:336), dialogue is recited along with the actor on screen. Banaji (2006/2012) also noted she observed women participating in film screenings, similar to how Srinivas describes above. Interestingly Srinivas (1998) observed these interactions in cinema auditoriums in India and in the US. It should be noted though that the cinema auditoriums Srinivas is referring to in the US were those specialising in screening mostly popular Hindi language films. Similar, scenes were to be found in British Asian specialist cinema auditoriums as well. Sanjeev Bhaskar recalls such participation and interactivity when he would go to watch films with his family in cinema auditoriums in Southall, west London. “It was a fantastic communal experience; we were all in it together. And people were singing along with the songs, people would applaud the hero. It was kind of pantomimic in its way, but it was just people getting involved, and that was kind of lovely cos everyone was doing it” (Bhaskar, 2018). In her observations of audiences at a midweek screening of a popular Hindi language film in a cinema in Willesden Green, London, Banaji (2006/2012) noted similar scenes to Srinivas above, women in the audience would chat among themselves, children would be fed as well as run around the auditorium. In another account of the film going experience, is Amit Rai’s (2002 and 2009) vivid recollections of the large number of people milling around the cinema, some there to watch the film, while others are there to enjoy the atmosphere. Rai also identifies how other senses and other perceptions are invoked, for example the effect of the heat whilst waiting to buy a ticket for the screening. These points, first, highlight the different circumstances in which many popular Hindi language films are watched, compared to perhaps the ways in which people watch popular Hollywood films. There is a lot of noise, either towards the screen or amongst each other. Second, the additional sounds as well as the smells and the feel of the heat can impact on the film watching experience. These points are relevant

to the thesis by emphasising the multisensory nature of media consumption which in turn can have an impact of ways of looking and forms of engagement.

The multiplex changed many of the practices discussed above. Adrian Athique (2011) explained that the first multiplex was built and opened in 1997 in Delhi. Led by India's markets opened up in the early 1990s, allowing numerous new developments. Malls, multiplexes, and franchised outlets, such as Pizza Hut and McDonalds, began to appear in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. These new venues for leisure were built near wealthy suburbs, targeting the middle classes. Both Srinivas (2002) and Athique (2011) argued that the multiplex changed the audiences' behaviour within the auditoriums from raucous participation to silent audience members. As discussed above, Srinivas (2002) identified, watching a film in a single screen auditorium was an interactive and participatory experience, it was a social and communal event. However, within the multiplex auditorium there was no interactivity or participation. The audiences do not shout at the screen when the villain appears, nor do they sing out loud to the songs in the film. Srinivas (2002) and Athique (2011:154-155) both argued that it become much more of a North American – European way of watching films, individualised and mostly silent. Thus, changing the sensory nature of watching a film from being a multi-sensory experience to one that focuses on sight and hearing.

As I highlighted above the main demographic attracted to attend multiplex screening are the urban middle class. This was unlike the single screen cinemas in local neighbourhoods also discussed above. Athique (2011) argued that there are several reasons for this such as the location of the multiplex, the cleanliness of the facilities and the range of films available. I have already discussed above that malls and multiplexes were built in and around wealthy suburbs. What this also meant was that there was 'a 'better' standard and wider choice of entertainment' (Athique, 2011;153). In other words, the auditoriums themselves would be in better conditions (as highlighted by Banaji above), but also, perhaps more importantly the patrons to the cinema would be of the same class and castes. Also, the multiplex can show a variety of films in one place, from the latest popular Hindi language films to regional language films; from art house films to Hollywood blockbusters, which Athique (2011) identified, has given Hollywood to a market that was previously quite restricted. The introduction of the cinemas in malls further emphasised a form of class segregation, that was initially seen in the cinemas themselves through the seating arrangements. as well as. through the location of the single screen cinemas themselves in particular neighbourhoods.

It should be noted that it seemed audiences commonly only watched certain parts of the films. Srinivas (2012) pointed out that it was very common for audience members to come and go from the auditorium whilst the film was being screened. Srinivas argued that audience members would either leave the auditorium or start their own conversations amongst themselves, during a serious scene or when a song and dance sequence was shown.

So far in this section I have focused on the construction of *darshan* in romantic melodramas with the popular Hindi language film canon. I have also talked about the reception of such films but also other similar films in both urban and rural settings in north India and an urban setting in south India (Dickey, 1993). In this section I have drawn attention to the varying film viewing practices and experiences of audiences in India. The next section moves on to examine the reception of popular Hindi language films in diasporic settings.

2.3 Looking at and Engagement with Television

2.3.1 The Glance

John Ellis (1982) described looking at television to be more of a glance than a gaze. A glance for Ellis is a way of looking that has no power (Ellis, 1982/1992:163) because the power of looking in this relationship is given over to the television camera. In other words, the relationship between television, and its viewers, is constructed through an understanding, whereby the television, is doing all the looking onto the outside world (the world beyond the domestic space) on behalf of the viewer. The act of looking is delegated to the television. While television does the looking onto the outside world, the viewer occasionally 'glances' at the television to see what it is looking at. Therefore, the power of looking is delegated to the television and the television institution, and it is the television institution that decides what should be looked at, and, how. The viewer then cannot dictate to the television what to look at. The viewer will simply accept the images the television is presenting (Ellis, 1982/1992:163-164).

The 'delegation' of the look to the TV by the viewer is emphasised through television aesthetics (Ellis 1982/1992). In other words, the way in which television programmes are constructed seem to insist that viewers give the power of looking over to the institution. However, this delegation, by the viewer, leads to the viewer losing concentration in the activity

of watching television (Ellis, 1982/1992). Therefore, Ellis argues this loss of concentration leads to various consequences:

> First, TV has to hold the attention of the viewer by various means; second, TV constructs a general sense of complicity between itself and its viewers in order to continue this sense of delegation of the look; third, TV has to seek to investigate the world outside… TV is the eye that sees; it is also the 'I' that is constructed as voyeur, investigating from a position of security (Ellis, 1982/1992:164).

In other words, to bring the viewers' attention back to the programme and to allow the viewer to regain a concentrated, focused look, television deploys a number of strategies. For example, when programmes return from advert breaks, a shortened version of the theme tune is played. Ellis argues that the viewer and television collude together thus allowing television to bring the outside world into the home.

The delegation of the look to the television is a benefit, but also a hindrance for Ellis. On the one hand, it could be a benefit exactly because of the safe distance television provides between the viewer and the events on the screen. It also does not require the viewer to concentrate their attention on the screen; it is a relaxed and casual experience (Ellis, 1982/1992:161). Then, on the other hand, it could also be understood to have negative connotations, in that as TV viewers (who are considered to be passive) delegate their look to television which leads them to be placed in 'positions of isolation rather than separation from the events shown' (Ellis, 1982/1992:165). 'The isolation of the viewer implies a lack of involvement with the events portrayed. This lack of participation is intensified by the voyeuristic activity of TV itself, and its recruitment of the viewer to be complicit with it. TV's separation from the events at which it looks becomes the viewer's isolation and insulation from them' (Ellis, 1982/1992:165-166). In other words, Ellis argues that, by relinquishing the power of the look to television, the viewer can become segregated from the outside world. As an initial understanding of how television viewers may look at television, Ellis' work is a good starting point. He outlines the key differences of not only the medium but also the space in which it is watched and how the texts themselves are constructed. However, Ellis highlights the glance as being the only way to look at television, an idea that has been critiqued over the years. I want to first examine the critiques of Ellis' ideas of viewers' attention and television as a distraction.

James Lull (1990) drew attention to various factors that need to be considered, when examining, television viewing habits and practices. Not only does Lull acknowledge (through Thomas Lindlof *et al*. (1987)) that there are numerous ways of looking at television, focused viewing, monitoring and idling (1990:165), but he also argues that 'patterns of attention… must be considered in relation to modes of viewing' (1990:165). In other words, the engagement of a viewer with a programme cannot be assumed just because they may be looking at the screen.

John Caldwell (1995) argues that television aesthetic and visual style, particularly American television from the late 1980s, has changed. For Caldwell, this change has not been explored to its fullest extent because of television studies focus on Ellis' ideas of the glance. Caldwell argues that the changes in the visual style of television have allowed television viewers to engage other ways of looking and specifically for Caldwell, pay more attention to television. By referring to Ellis' notion of the glance as 'surrender gaze theory' (Caldwell, 1995:25), Caldwell disagrees with the overarching assumption of the glance, that viewers are 'distracted and inattentive' (Caldwell, 1995:25). Caldwell acknowledges at the time the ideas of glance were developed it may have been an appropriate term to use to describe how a viewer looks at television. But for Caldwell television has changed and glance is no longer an adequate term to use. There is the connotation of the term glance that the viewer is disengaged and ignorant of what they are watching (Caldwell, 1995:25-26). This is where Caldwell's analysis of excessive style on television comes in: he suggests that this style, indeed, allowed for a change in how viewers looked at television and that they became more focused when watching.

However, others have theorised the excessive style and exhibitionism of television, that Caldwell refers to, are symptoms of distraction (Caughie, 2006:12-13). In other words, for Caughie, the visual style of television is large, over the top and brash, and it is these characteristics that Caughie argues are part of the distraction of television for the viewer. Through the work of Georg Simmel (1997), Siegfried Kracauer (1995) and Walter Benjamin (1992), Caughie acknowledges that they have laid

> the basis for an understanding of new forms of attention and distraction, and potentially at least, of new forms of intellectual pleasure – relaxed detachment and intelligent appraisal – which are more appropriate to thinking about television (Caughie, 2006:13).

Caughie further emphasises this point by looking at Jonathan Crary's (2001) arguments of how 'attention and perception cannot be conceived as stable, unchanging forms of engagement but are themselves subject to historical change and contestation' (Caughie, 2006:13). In other words, discussions of distraction need to be fluid and not static. A viewer's engagement with a television programme is changing and so Caughie offers a good understanding of how television engagement should be seen. He argues that looking, and attention or engagement, are not necessarily interlinked and that ideas of distraction should not be formulaic or fixed.

Helen Wheatley (2016) argues against Ellis' idea of there being a lack of visual pleasure that can be garnered from television. Through contemporary visual imagery being used in television drama. Wheatley offers other labels for looking at television, that goes beyond simply a glance, and describes how television allows viewers to practice the brazen gaze (Wheatley, 2016:213). Wheatley describes the brazen gaze as

> unashamed looking from a position which, for the character on the screen, is often concealed (she looks hard at the object of her desire from some undetected place in the diegesis) and which for the female viewer is always concealed (from her position on the 'other side' of the screen (Wheatley, 2016:213).

A brazen gaze is a form of looking that places the character, and in turn the viewer, at home in a hidden place from which to watch and gaze upon the object of their desire. Wheatley demonstrates how this visual construct is not simply presented in heterosexual, but also for lesbian relations. Wheatley's argument here is useful to move discussions of how to look at television beyond the glance, but it is heavily grounded, and contextualised, in debates of western desire and pleasure.

Other critiques of Ellis' ideas examine the delegation of the look. Karen Lury (2001) argues that the conception of delegating the look is no longer sustainable and 'the idea that television is separate either from the rest of the world or from the world of the viewer. The point is, surely, that its presence has increased the permeability between the different worlds' (Lury, 2001:134). In other words, television has become part of the everyday experiences of life for many people, therefore the detachment and distance of the events on screen has faded (Lury, 2001:134). Lury's argument is a useful revaluation of the role television once had in presenting to its viewer's events from around the world. However, this role has now changed, particularly in the 21st century as the advancement of technology allows television to be with its viewers

24 hours a day, seven days a week. In other words, now that television is available on smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices, viewers are no longer restricted to watching television in private domestic spaces.

The lack of distance and development of technology is also emphasised in the work of Sherryl Wilson (2016) and Liz Evans *et. al* (2017). The internet, and social media, have helped reduce the distance, and enhance viewers', experience of watching programmes. For example, while viewers watch television, they can now access additional content and communicate with other viewers simultaneously thus enriching their television viewing experience. These discussions and interactions can also take place before, as well as, after the programme is broadcast and can take on numerous forms including the creation of fan fiction or additional content. This content can be shared through fan sites, YouTube channels and social networks like Instagram and Facebook. Television producers and showrunners also encourage viewer interaction by either asking the viewer to have their say or displaying a hashtag along with the name of the programme.

Nevertheless, Ellis' notion of the glancing look at television has some validity, particularly when exploring how television is watched in a multi-screen context as the glance allows the viewer to undertake other activities at the same time. It also begins to lay the groundwork for discussing other forms of looking at television. However, the idea that glancing is the only way in which an audience looks towards television needs to be examined. I acknowledge that television can be watched without fully concentrating on each and every image it broadcasts, thus, allowing a form of distracted looking to occur, as evidenced by a number of empirical studies of television audiences, that were carried out in the United States. Maura Clancey's (1994) research is one such study, and, it found audiences engaged in numerous activities. These included, but were not limited, to eating/drinking, reading, chores, childcare, and homework. Clancey also found that it was mainly the younger respondents who engaged in other activities whilst watching television, 'respondents age 50 and older reported a higher incidence of "television – only" (Clancey, 1994:9). This distracted looking at television also makes it easier for television to become an everyday medium as acknowledged by the studies of Rogge, (1989), Silverstone (1994) and Gauntlett and Hill, (1999). Frolova (2017) offers a more contemporary understanding of watching television, particularly with the development of new technologies that allow viewers to pause, rewind live broadcasts, or time shift entire episodes or series to more convenient times. Frolova argues that her participants who

watched television as it was broadcast did not consider it as 'watching television', therefore a re-examination of what 'watching television' means is needed (Frolova, 2017:245), a point I have discussed in Chapter 1.

The way in which television allows audiences to partake in other activities, even while 'watching' television, is evidence of the idea that there is a possibility of more than one form of looking at television. My argument for the multiplicitous nature of looking at television is further emphasised by the work of Krugman and Johnson (1991), who found that watching television can be a multi-sensory experience. Krugman and Johnson argue that if television viewers did not have their eyes fixed on the television screen then it does not mean they are not watching television, they could be listening to the programme: 'that focus on either visual orientation or competing activities indicate that viewing is a multifaceted experience that is not all or nothing' (Krugman and Johnson, 1991:np).

Although, this thesis focuses on television audiences it is also important to mention studies that have highlighted the multi-sensory nature of film viewing. Lakshmi Srinivas (1998) concludes that the participants she observed watching films in India and in the US, were very active and emotions play a key role in how they watch the film. These were viewers of popular Hindi films, she found that the experience for them was heavily participatory and that the context or space in which they watched the film was important too. There are other works that look at this multisensory nature of watching films in more detail, but I do not have the space to examine them in detail. I want the focus to remain on television audiences.

2.3.2 Encoding/Decoding

As discussed above, the work of Desai (2004), Banaji (2006) and Bhattacharya Chairs (2004) referred to the different ways of audience members can make meanings from the text they are watching. They argue that audiences can understand texts in three ways: take the preferred reading, negotiate the messages in the text, or, resist them. These all stem from Stuart Hall's (1973) theorisation of encoding/decoding. The theory was developed from the assumption that audiences were passive receivers of the messages embedded within a given media text. This idea of the passive audience was the basis of mass communication research and revolved around the idea that whatever message was embedded in a text the audience would understand and accept it. Hall identified three different positions from which the audience understands media texts. The first is the dominant position. 'A viewer who operates through

this position 'decodes the message in term of the references code in which it has been encoded' (Hall, 1973:136). In other words, the viewer who reads, and understands, in agreement with the messages that are encoded within the TV programme. The second is the negotiated position, whereby the viewer sees, and understands, the encoded message that is dominant. 'The negotiated version of the dominant ideology is thus shot through with contradictions, though these are only on certain occasions brought to full visibility' (Hall, 1973:137). In other words, in this position the viewer can agree with the dominant ideology they are presented with but also at the same they can reject it if it is something they are oppose. This then leads to the third viewing position, whereby, the viewer understands the ideology presented to them, but they wholly reject and oppose the ideology. Through this, hypothetical conceptualisation of how a viewer understands a text, there is a suggestion that the viewer is active and thus contrasting earlier assertions. Hall furthered the argument by stating that the position the viewer takes is dependent on various intersections of not only their personhood but their experiences as well.

2.3.3 *Darshan* and Television

Another way of looking at television that is established by Philip Lutgendorf (1995) can also be a critique of Ellis' idea of the glance. Lutgendorf's discussion of the *Ramayan* (1987) highlights how the producers of the serial blended together different forms of storytelling, such as the *Ramlila* and the *katha* traditions, to produce the serial.[xxii] This blend created a recognisable visual, but also a verbal, aesthetic for the viewer, thus also allowing the viewers to take *darshan* from the serial (Lutgendorf, 1995:332). 'The television screen is particularly suited to this kind of close-up mime, and Sagar exploited its potential to allow his viewers an experience of intense communication with epic characters' (Lutgendorf, 1995:332). In addition to bringing in conventions from *katha* and Ramlila, the director (Ramanand Sagar) also brought in conventions found in established recitals and performances of the narrative. An example is the 'Vasinava performance genre: *jhanki* (glimpse or tableau), in which consecrated persons or images… are dressed and made up to … evoke mythic scenes. These tableaux are presented for contemplation by audiences, often to the accompaniment of devotional singing' (Hein, 1972, in Lutgendorf, 1995:330). In other words, these tableaux moments in the *Ramayan* drama are key moments for viewers to take *darshan* from the deity. I find that the techniques used by the director to create the visuals in the *Ramayan* counteract Ellis' ideas of distance and delegation. Instead, the visuals bring the audience closer to the action, in a way that Lury argues above.

The visuals do not delegate looking to the camera rather, they give the power of looking to the viewer so they can take *darshan* during the tableaux moments.

An understanding of how an audience responds to these tableaux moments in the serialisations comes throughs in the ethnographic research of Purnima Mankekar (1999). Mankekar critiqued Indian television and how it represented women as embodying nationhood in a post-colonial India. In the study, Mankekar (1999) frames the presentation of *darshan* in the serial through the concept of *bhakti* (loving devotion). Therefore, how the serial encourages a spiritual and devotional relationship between the devotee (viewer) and the deity (the actor playing a role). Through her textual analysis of the *Ramayan* serial, Mankekar (1999) found the manner in which the serial was produced, so through the visuals and its use of sound, the viewers were actively encouraged to take/seek *darshan* from the actors playing the role of deities, namely from the actor who plays the lead role of Rama. Some of the strategies used include frontal heads shots of the actor as Rama, prayers are chanted over these and other shots in the opening sequences of episodes; viewers would also be presented with *bhajans* (devotional hymns) as well. Mankekar did not observe her participants taking *darshan* from opportunities that were presented in the serial, but through her interviews she did learn of how some viewers would prepare to watch the serial by performing ablutions beforehand.

Mankekar explains that there are numerous forms of engagement occurring whilst some of her participants watched the serials. On the one hand, there is the suggestion that the participants, at least, are aware and conscious of the programme being religious. Therefore, they watch it with a religious mindset and its associated emotions. I argue that this mindset might be similar or the same as the mindset a devotee may have in a temple setting. But on the other hand, Mankekar (1999) explains they are also aware that it was a serial, a form of entertainment as well. This explanation of the viewer's forms of engagement highlights that *darshan* can be, and is taken by, viewers from television, but there are other forms of engagement occurring and the process is complex. There are suggestions of critical engagement here, as the viewer is aware of the entertainment factor of the programme, but also perhaps there are forms of engagement that is focused and concentrated, as opposed to simply distracted as suggested by Ellis.

As this research takes place in the UK, literature that has studied transnational television and diasporic audiences will be considered. Later in the chapter, I will examine Marie Gillespie's

(1995) study of south Asian youths as it was her study that initially highlighted the multiple forms of engagement that can occur whilst watching television. But I want to first examine another conceptualisation of looking. Above the theorisations have focused on television programmes made in the UK or US and shown to UK and US-based audiences. Or they have focused on Indian, Hindi language programmes and north Indian, urban audiences. I want to now consider transnational television programmes and how they might be viewed by a diasporic and/or transnational audience.

2.4 Television Audience Studies

2.4.1 Indian Television Audiences

Mankekar (1993 in Brunsdon & Spigel, 2008) highlights how additional factors, beyond the construction of the soap opera, show women (housewives) in India their place. 'Gender, household position and age were crucial factors influencing viewers' styles of interaction with what they watched. Power relations within families were sometimes reflected in how people arranged themselves around the television set: the older generations (usually men but sometimes older women as well) would be seated on the few chairs; the children would squat on the floor' (Mankekar, 1993 in Brunsdon & Spigel, 2008:253). Mankekar acknowledges that 'most of the women I worked with did not have the luxury of sitting "glued to the television set" (Mankekar, 1993 in Brunsdon & Spigel, 2008:253) the women would be doing other household jobs. Mankekar does assert that 'despite the fact that most of the women half-watched, half-listened while cooking, serving food, doing dishes, or sweeping the floor, they were nonetheless able to engage intimately with what they "viewed" (Mankekar, 1993 in Brunsdon & Spigel, 2008:253).

Sujata Moorti's (2007) study of television serials available to the American South Asian Indian diaspora reiterate these arguments in terms of television. Moorti argues that television programmes made in the US by the diaspora 'tend to shun an assimilationist model of immigration and instead offer trajectories that permit the maintenance of an Indian cultural identity even as the emigres work and live in the United States' (Moorti, 2007:4), while Indian television programming offers double-sited and double-vision to its audiences (Moorti, 2007:2). In other words, Indian television is geographically situated not only in India but also elsewhere: Moorti in the USA, in my case, in Europe as ZEE TV makes evident. Moorti's further argues that in addition to the double [geographical] sited concept, Indian television gives its

audience two ways of looking, by offering an Indian point of view as well as a diasporic point of view (Moorti, 2007:2).

The television programmes can offer these points of view, through what Moorti refers to as the ‘‘transnational optic’. The transnational optic is ‘a way of seeing that de-familiarizes the metropolitan subject (in the nation and in the diaspora) and introduces a visual grammar that is simultaneously familiar, domestic, national and global’ (Moorti, 2007:2). Moorti argues that the transnational optic

> allows us to understand the way in which the national imaginary is enhanced and internationalized by the diaspora. It forces an acknowledgement that images and narratives from India emerge not just from within the nation, but also from an international arena that is aligned across nationalist vectors (Moorti, 2007:2-3).

In other words, the representations and narrative in transnational media, if viewed through the transnational optic, are ‘simultaneously global and local’ (Moorti, 2007:2). They are images and narratives universally understood by people in India and across the diaspora. Moorti’s arguments were focused on two forms of melodramatic serials. The first were serials made in the US and aimed at Indian diasporic audiences residing in the US, and the second were the serials made in India aimed at audiences in India as well as further afield like the UK and US. Moorti’s application of the transnational optic is specific to American Indian diasporic audiences and specific to melodramatic serials on television. The transnational optic could be applicable to British Indian diasporic audiences, but it is difficult to say for certain particularly as, unlike in the US, there are no British Indian language serials that can be used as a comparison. The focus of the analysis is on the serials made in India. Also, the social and cultural contexts of the British audience is different from the American Indian audience and they need to be considered as well.

Moorti’s work offers two key insights into understanding Indian Hindi language television programmes from a perspective beyond Indian borders. Until now both Lutgendorf and Mankekar’s work was focused on how audiences in India were encouraged to read the television text (Lutgendorf) and how they were actually read (Mankekar). The first insight Moorti provides is the idea that the first generation of the Indian diaspora living in the US and the UK want to hold on to the traditions and values of the India they know. Secondly, that Indian television programmes are embedded with a “double-vision”. However, Moorti

developed her arguments of the transnational optic through textual analysis. Like Prasad and Vasudevan above, it is a theorisation of how television programmes are constructed for audiences, and how audiences may look upon these programmes. Moorti does not conduct any empirical research into the Indian Hindu diaspora in the US. But two studies by Indira Somani and her co-authors do examine US-based Indian audiences that emphasise Moorti's idea of nostalgia for India amongst the first generation of immigrants.

In the article "That's Not Real India": Responses to Women's Portrayals in Indian Soap Operas' (2016), Somani and Doshi explore the how 100 Asian Indians, living in urban areas across the US, understand the representation of women in Indian soap operas. Their participants were older and could be described as first-generation migrants. They had arrived in the US in the 1950s and 1960s and were highly educated and economically quite well off. Somani and Doshi found that their participants did not like the soap operas as it presented a version of India, to them, that was not in line with their idealised nostalgic image they had left with back in the 50 or the 60s. The role of women in the soap operas was also linked to this nostalgic idle, as Somani and Doshi highlight, 'these portrayals [of women] challenged participants to accept that their cherished India of the 1960s no longer existed even on screen' (2016:224). The nostalgia of India, a connection to its culture and having a sense of identity, was further emphasised in a later article by Somani and Guo (2018). In this article, Somani and Guo were focused on what is it about the Indian soap operas their participant found appealing. They found that the couples they interviewed were attracted to Indian programmes for several reasons which were largely focused on how it allowed them to stay connected with Indian culture, which in turn meant it was part of their ethnic identity.

Another aspect that this highlighted in both articles is the experience the audiences in the studies above have of watching television. Somani and Doshi and Somani and Guo explain that the participants in the two sample had not watched television prior to arriving in the US. The participants were used to American television viewing habits, although some of the participants would regularly go to watch film whilst still in India. Through their research Somani and Guo (2018:78), in particular, 'shed light on how a diasporic group, which economically and professionally successful and has seemingly acculturated into the American society, still called India "home" after decades of living abroad'.

In both articles, neither Somani and Doshi, or, Somani and Guo explicitly state if the sample was made up of participants who may or may not be members of a religion. Nor is it explicitly stated where in India the couples came from and where they go back to. Therefore, it is unclear if the sample consisted of participants from a range of different religions and/or form different parts of India. They do state in one limitation of the study that a snowballing method was used to gather participants which may suggest that the sample was formed of participants from one or two religions and possibly from the same or similar areas in India. Another limitation that Somani and Doshi (2016) refer to how the findings of this study of women on soap operas is particular to the first generation of the diaspora. The younger generations do not feel the same connection to India, as their parents or grandparents, and would see India as more of an imagined community, a concept I examine in more detail below.

2.4.2 British Diasporic Audience Studies

The taking of *darshan* from television was observed by Marie Gillespie (1995a) during her study of a South Asian family as part of her fieldwork. During the observation of the Dhani family as they watched two dramatized versions of the Hindu epic the Mahabharata, Gillespie noticed that the members of the family practice a culturally specific way of watching, what she terms 'sacred serials' (Gillespie, 1995a:358). The family, particularly the mother, regard watching the 'sacred serials' as an act of devotion which Gillespie refers to as 'devotional viewing' that is 'a culturally distinctive form of TV consumption' (Gillespie, 1995a:358). Through 'devotional viewing', Gillespie was able to establish that the Dhani family do take *darshan* from the religious films they watch on video and 'sacred serials' they watch on television or on video. Gillespie also emphasised that the family's religious beliefs were integrated into their everyday lives and activities (Gillespie, 1995a:356). It was this integration that allowed them to see and take *darshan* in not only the religious programmes they watched but the films as well. What Gillespie implies here is that because different worshipping practices are integral to the family's daily lives, they can see and thus take advantage of *darshan* when it is constructed in sacred serials or religious films they watch. This may not be as apparent to a similar family whose religious practices do not form such an integral role in their daily lives.

Gillespie's study highlights how the culture and religion of an audience, in this case, a television audience, can influence the way in which they watch specific kinds of television. What we begin to see here is how the diasporic audiences' knowledge and understanding of

multiple cultures, as well as the programmes they watch, gives them the opportunities for different identifications. This occupation of different spaces (namely geographical space as the diasporic audience do not reside in their homeland) and formulations of different identifications can influence different looking practices amongst the diaspora. In other words, the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women in this study are likely to have different looking practices towards television programmes like *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* compared to white British women. This is because the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women straddle many lines, such as geographically (India – UK), religiously (Hindu), ethnically (Indian), regionally (from Gujarat) and linguistically (Gujarati). At the same time, they will also have different looking practices towards the Hindi serials they watch on Star Plus or ZEE TV because they do not live in India, and have experiences Indian women living in India do not have.

Vijay Mishra (2002) writes that the first generations of the new Indian diaspora 'desperately try to hang on to values that mark their difference from the rest of the nation-state' (Mishra, 2002:236). This created 'a diasporic imaginary' within the diaspora and the films they watched, the television programmes they watched allowed this imaginary to flourish. The concept of diasporic imaginary is the development of Benedict Anderson's concept of the imagined community. Anderson described a nation as a concept that is 'imagined' by the community and/or a group who have similar values. However, Anderson argued they are imagined 'because members of even the smallest nation will never know most their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson, 1983/2006:6). In other words, a nation is entirely a social and community-based construct. It lives in the minds of those who share its values. And so, in a similar vein to this concept, Mishra argues that the first generation of the Indian diaspora held onto the values of India, so they could still maintain a connection to the imagined community of India. This, in turn, led to the creation of a diasporic imaginary, which Indian media perpetuated. An example of this continuation of the diasporic imaginary by Indian media is the 1995 film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (Lovers Win the Bride)*. Mishra highlights how in the opening sequence of the film we see a 'Punjabi migrant feeding pigeons in Trafalgar Square. [But] The voice-over expresses the man's diasporic anxieties immediately' (Mishra, 2002:251). This scene and the voice over are accompanied by a female choir singing '*ghar aaja pardeshi, tera desh bolaye re*' (come home stranger, your homeland is calling you'). Mishra's focus was on the use of film by the diaspora to uphold these values and traditions and

further emphasise the ideas highlighted by Moorti, Somani and Doshi and Somani and Guo above regarding the first generation of the diaspora to still long for the homeland.

A number of empirical media audience studies that examine Indian diasporic audiences here in the UK, mostly, focus on the question of identity. Marie Gillespie's study, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (1995), explored how new ethnicities, and new identities might be forming in the South Asian community in Southall, West London. Gillespie focused mostly on the youth of the community, and she observed what role television played in how the young people came to formulate identities and define ethnicities. In the study, there are glimpses into the viewing practices of not only the young people in the community but their families as well. I have already discussed above some of Gillespie's findings of one family's viewing practices of 'sacred serials'. Another aspect Gillespie highlights in her study is the way in which young people in her sample watched western soap operas, namely *Neighbours,* with their mothers. Gillespie found that 'most mothers condone their children's regular viewing of *Neighbours* because it is time, structured into the day when they know their children will be settled down in front of the TV' (Gillespie, 1995:96). She also found that for the young people watching television with mother can be, on the one hand, a way in which to garner an intimate relationship with their mother but on the other hand it can also lead to arguments (Gillespie, 1995). Due to Gillespie's study concentrating on young people we do not hear what the mothers' think about these viewing situations beyond what Gillespie has stated. In addition, she was not able to capture the women's consumption of other western soap operas or any other form of western television.

Rajinder Dudrah's (2002a (and updated in 2005)) study of South Asian diasporic identities and representations of 'belonging to Western Europe' (Dudrah, 2002a:163) gives new insight into the consumption of transnational television amongst British South Asians. Through textual analyses of two programmes produced and broadcast on Zee TV- Europe, *Your Zindagi*/*Your Life* and *Euro Zindagi*/*Euro Life*; as well as using extended interviews of audience members, Dudrah explored the creation of new identities through the new representations presented on ZEE TV. He concludes that:

> on its own, ZEE TV-Europe does not create a South Asian Diaspora identity; the channel is not divorced from the wider social, cultural and political realities of its viewers. However, the channel fuels a continued desire for, and a pleasure in

> the viewing of, complex South Asian identities (Dudrah, 2002a: 176-177).

Dudrah's conclusion offers a view of the complexity of the South Asian diaspora. His findings highlight that the diaspora's identity goes beyond simple nostalgia for the homeland. He further emphasises that ZEE TV recognises this complexity and offer viewers forms of identification other television channels cannot necessarily provide. In other words, Dudrah identifies that ZEE TV filled a gap, namely that left by UK television.

Above I have focused largely on audience studies that focus on the South Asian diaspora in the UK and their television viewing habits, be it terrestrial television or transnational television. However, there are other audience studies of different communities that can be drawn on that reveal parallel findings to those discussed above, see Robins and Aksoy (2003)[xxiii]. I want to now turn to literature that has specifically explored soap operas, and their audiences, specifically women.

2.5 Soap Operas

The sections above have discussed literature based on film, both Hollywood melodramas and popular Hindi language films, as well as various genres of television, mainly drama, with some references to soap operas. As the thesis is examining women's consumption of Hindi language serials, this section focuses on literature that has examined soap operas both here in the UK and the Hindi language serials from India. In this thesis I understand soap opera to refer to a format of drama that is continuous and seemingly never ending. I use serials as a term to refer to Hindi language programmes with the same conventions, but it is the term used by the participants of this research and so this is why I refer to them as such.

In the 1980s and into the 1990s, a body of work grew around the consumption of soap opera by women. Some of this work, focused on the text itself, and highlighted how they were aimed at women; while other studies were empirical audience studies. The text based work of Charlotte Brunsdon (1982), Tania Modleski (1981), Christine Geraghty (1991) highlighted the conventions of the genre, how they were aimed at women, specifically women who stayed at home, and the pleasure female audiences got from watching soap operas. Modleski (1981) argued that the production techniques used in a soap opera, techniques such as close-up shots and cutting away at key moments; not only encouraged women to keep watching the soap

opera but also allowed them to continue their domestic chores in between. Geraghty (1991) highlighted the use of strong female characters taking on key roles in narratives. The storylines are often told from a female characters' perspective. Modleski argued that the use of the close up shot and the number of female characters 'activate[s] the gaze of the mother… to provoke anxiety… about the welfare of others' (Modleski, 1981, in Kaplan, 1983:70). In other words, soap operas provide viewers with training into how to read and interpret someone's feelings and desires (Modleski, 1981, in Kaplan, 1983). The narratives are highly personal and intimate, as Brunsdon explains - the frame or field in which meanings are made, in which significance is constructed narratively – is that of the "personal life"; more particularly, personal life in its everyday realisation through personal relationships' (Brunsdon, 1982 in Kaplan, 1983:78). That is to say, soap operas construct images of public spaces, and talk about issues normally discussed in public spaces, through relationships female viewers find personal. Brunsdon goes on to explain how romance and family life is used to bring the public space into the personal space. You will see characters attending wedding ceremonies, funerals, parties and so on thus representing the masculine public sphere from the point of view of the personal (Brunsdon, 1982 in Kaplan, 1983:78).

Many of the features and conventions of the soap opera are sources of pleasure for viewers. Modleski (1981) argued that because of the way in which soap operas were constructed and the ability for women at home to watch them in fragments and with interruptions was a source of pleasure. But this interruption and fragmentation was a tool to perpetuate patriarchal norms (Modleski, 1981; also echoed by Brown 1994). However, Geraghty (1991:40) argued that the 'enjoyment of [soap operas] will be affected by the way in which the woman viewer is herself position within the home as mother/wife/daughter, for instance and her activities outside it'. However, 'soaps overturn the deeply entrenched value structure which is based on the traditional oppositions of masculinity [active] and femininity [passive]' (Geraghty, 1991: 41, bracketed text added). Geraghty explained that soap operas bring issues that are normally discussed in the public sphere into the personal sphere or vice versa (also see Brunsdon 1982).

Textual studies of Hindi language serials have also highlighted their features and conventions; as well as imply the position of women in society through key characters. Shehina Fazal (2009:41) argued that the early representations of strong women in Hindi language serials

have now disappeared and made way for female characters who depict 'traditional cultural values as well as participation in global consumerism.' Fazal argued, women in Hindi language serials were represented as individual and resisting patriarchal gendered roles for themselves, as opposed to the greater good of all Indian women. Fazal's work maps, not only the serials themselves, but also literature that has examined the ways in which women are represented in serials pre-and post-deregulation. The chapter outlines the impact of transnational media on content made in India and begins to provide insight into audience responses to these changes.

There are have been many studies examining the reception of soap operas. A key study is Ien Ang's (1985) seminal work on audiences of the soap opera *Dallas*. Ang found that viewers of *Dallas* identified with characters and the 'emotional realism' (Ang, 1985:83) that was shown. In other words, the participants of the research enjoyed the manner in which *Dallas* presented them with, not only depictions of real emotions, but also the effects of such emotions on the person/character, and on the other people/characters around. Emotional realism was not the only factor that gave her participants pleasure. Ang also found many watched a programme like *Dallas* for ironic pleasure. Ang noted that these participants did not think the programme was very good, therefore, found pleasure in mocking it and talking about it in a derogatory manner (Ang, 1985). Ang's findings are significant to this study, particularly in relation to how women garner pleasure from watching soap operas. Through Modleski's, Geraghty's and Ang's work we begin to understand the complex nature of pleasure and how some of it can be garnered through resistive practices.

Women from the Indian diasporic community living in the UK were also watching soap operas such as *Crossroads* and *Dallas*. However, as I stated in the introduction to the thesis, there are not many detailed explorations of this demographic of the audience. Gillespie (1995) discussed young people from the South Asian diaspora watching soap operas, but this was alongside their consumption of a range of programmes from news to religious programmes to adverts. In the introduction I mentioned Dorothy Hobson's (1989) brief discussion of responses a 23-year old Indian woman about EastEnders. Hobson noted this participants' knowledge of South Asian cultures gave her additional insight and understanding of a storyline that was being broadcast in *EastEnders* at the time of the research. This insight allowed Hobson and the other participants to see the storyline from a South Asian perspective – a point of view not represented in the programme itself. Hobson articulates that the participants' knowledge of the storyline came from her own similar experience to those being portrayed, and even though

the other research participants wanted to know what she thought they did not ask her outright. Instead, it was done in a subtle manner and Hobson implies that the other participants used the story line from *EastEnders* to get gossip about the South Asian woman's (who was also a participant of the research) situation. A key factor of this research that is relevant to this study is that it begins to provide evidence of the viewer's background influencing the way in which television can be watched, in this case because the participant stating that she is unhappy with the way in which the South Asian community is portrayed on screen (Hobson, 1989:165). This suggests that viewers of the soap opera within this community do not have believable or recognisable characters to identify with. Also, Hobson can see that 'her assessment [of the storyline] was based on her knowledge of the culture and of her own experiences: a nice example of the way that the knowledge of the audience is

2. 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I surveyed literature that has explored looking and engagement with films and television programmes. The literature examined were not only text-based theorisations of looking and engagement; but also empirical research using actual audience responses as well. The chapter began with theorisations of looking and engagement with classic Hollywood narrative films. These discussions were framed through psychoanalysis and focused on sexualised identification and positioning of both the characters and the spectators. From this starting point the literature considered studies that remained focused on Hollywood film but were framed through cultural studies. Moving away from Hollywood the chapter examined religious and politicised theorisations of looking and engaging with popular Hindi language films.

These studies have highlighted that as an initial step, the text itself needs to be examined. Understanding how the text is structured, the dominant messages within the text need to be established. After which how an audience member identifies with the text can be comprehended. Therefore, identification is key to how a viewer looks at but more so, engages with the text. This has formed many of the conclusions of the studies discussed above, particularly the audience studies and transnational television studies. Not only was socio-cultural (culture and religion) knowledge and understanding key to comprehending and engaging with texts, other factors such as the audience members' socio-economic positioning and gender was also important. This has informed my study which interrogates these aspects

of my audience to understand how different ways of looking may occur toward specific types of television; that is prime time Hindi language serials.

An additional area of focus also seemed to develop through the literature. These centred on various external factors beyond the audience member and the text. In other words, to understand looking and engagement by an audience member other factors such as the physical space in which television is watched, as well as the impact and influence of various technology devices such as smart phones, should also be examined.

The literature highlighted multiple ways of looking and engagement are possible towards film but mostly towards television. The studies also emphasised the relationship between looking at television and a viewer's engagement with a programme. Krugman and Johnson emphasised that engagement can be multi-sensory, involving looking and listening. In other words, a viewer can be engaged with a television programme through not only looking at the television but also by just listening. The literature also began to highlight that looking, and engagement, are not necessarily connected in the way one may think. For example fully focused looking does not necessarily mean the viewer is also fully engaged and vice versa. There is an intertwining of looking and engagement that occurs that is fluid and complex. While this chapter has examined the established literature around looking in relation to film and television, diasporic television audiences and women and soap operas, Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological direction taken in the field.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3. 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will outline and evaluate the methodological framework that has been used to gather data for this study. I implemented a mixed methods approach, which included a survey, textual analysis, participant observation and interviews, in order to examine who amongst older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women in Preston are watching prime time Hindi serials, where they watch television and what activities are undertaken whilst watching television. I divided the research into three phases; firstly, a broad survey to establish general television viewing habits of women from this community in Preston; as well as specifics about what kind of Indian transnational television was being watched at the time. This was to get a general understanding of who was watching Indian television and to help with recruitment for the ethnographic phase of the research. Secondly, the phase which consisted of participant observations and semi structured interviews allowed me to examine the spaces where the women watched television, understand the women's early experiences of watching television, what they enjoy about watching Hindi serials and if they undertake other activities. The final phase was the textual analysis of the serials that were watched during the observations to examine whether *darshan* is presented to viewers in prime-time Hindi serials. I use this broad range of methods because in the study I am interested in holistically exploring as many factors as possible that may or may not have an impact on different ways of looking and different forms of engagement. Therefore, a range of methods need to be used to not only look at the text but also the audience, as well as spaces and technology.

In the first section I provide vital background to the location where the research was conducted, that is the north western British city of Preston in Lancashire. In the second section, I will evaluate the utilisation of the survey for this study and the results from the survey. In the third section I discuss the use of participant observations, by outlining and evaluating the use of the method by scholars in their television audience studies, namely Thomas Tufte (2000), Marie Gillespie (1995) and Purnima Mankekar (1999). This is followed by brief biographies of the participants who inform the in-depth part of this study. I will then discuss and evaluate the use of interviews and textual analysis. In the final section, I will discuss specific ethical considerations.

3.2 The Indian Hindu Diaspora in Preston

As I stated in the Introduction to the thesis, I identify as a Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic woman. I was born and brought up in Preston, in Lancashire. I lived in the city for a large part of my childhood; before I moved with my family to the small town of Leyland, located just south of Preston. After Leyland, I moved back to Preston until leaving for university at the age of 18. At this age my maternal grandparent and my parents remained in the city. It is through this familiarity and knowledge of the city and its Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu community I chose Preston as the location for this research. This prior knowledge and understanding of the community can be described as ethnographic groundwork (Gillespie, 1995:61-62).

The 2011 census data revealed the population of Preston to be 140,202. However, the Office of National Statistics mid-year population estimate is currently 141,801 (2017). Like many north-western towns and cities, Preston once had a thriving textile industry, but now this has largely disappeared. It is work in these textile mills that drew economic migrants from India and East Africa to the city from the late 1950s onwards. It is because of these opportunities for work that my maternal grandfather settled himself and his family in Preston. My grandfather began working in the textile mills, my grandmother worked in the Fox's biscuit factory, located in the town of Kirkham and older children gained employment in retail. Younger children of the family were enrolled into school.

The textiles industry in Preston drew many to the city. This was due to the link between Gujarat and the textile, predominately cotton, industry. Gujarat is well known for its textile production, and cotton has been a crop grown in the state since at least as far back as the 13th century. In the south of the state, the city of Surat has been a key producer of cotton and silk (Solanki, 2015). During the time of the British Empire, it was a vital port from which cotton was shipped to reach the mill towns and cities of northern England, like Preston. In the 1960s when there was a shortage of labour for the textile mills, many Gujaratis were hired to fill this gap. Prior to arriving in the UK many Gujaratis may have worked in the cotton industry from farming the crop to working in the mills in India.

According to the most recent census information taken in 2011a, there are 3,338 Hindus in Preston. This figure is made up of people from all ethnicities who declared themselves to follow Hinduism. It was not possible at the time of writing to separate the data in terms of

ethnicity. However, 3, 273 (98%) described their ethnicity as Asian or British Asian; from this figure, 3,187 (97.3%) identified as being Indian (Office of National Statistics, 2011b).

Hindu Population of Preston (Based on a population of 3,338)			Population of Preston (based on a population of 140,202)		
Age Range	Sex		Age Range	Sex	
	Female	Male		Female	Male
<10	9.9%	9.2%	<10	11.9%	12.7%
10-19	10.3%	11.4%	10 - 19	12.9%	13.3%
20-39	34.6%	38.0%	20 - 39	30.3%	31.3%
40-59	29.9%	28.1%	40 – 59	24.6%	25.4%
>60	15.2%	13.2%	>60	20.2%	17.3%

Figure 3 Population of Preston and Hindus in the City. Source: Office of National Statistics, 2011c.

Figure 3 above show how gender is split across the ages both within the Hindu population in Preston and across the city as a whole. The gender split is that men constitute 50.6% (1690) of the population while women make up 49.4% (1648). The census data also revealed that the majority of those who described themselves as Hindus were born in the Middle East/ Asia– 44.2% (1,477) followed by those born in the United Kingdom (40.5% - 1353), 14.9% (499) of this population were born in Africa (Office of National Statistics, 2011d).[xxiv]

The Indian Hindu diaspora in Preston is made up of a number of different groups; firstly, there is the Gujarati community, from the western Indian state of Gujarat, who account for the majority of the Hindus in Preston. Then there is the Telegu community from the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and finally a fluctuating group of students from various parts of India that are studying at the University of Central Lancashire. It is the Gujarati Indian Hindu community that this thesis is focused on and it is comprised of those who came directly from the Indian Sub-Continent and those who came from Eastern and Southern African countries. My own family history reflects this migration pattern, my maternal family settled in the UK after leaving India where they had been for a few years and prior to that they had lived in Kenya. Stephen Harrison (1978) distinguishes the community as Gujarati speaking as opposed to Gujarati in origin due to the difference in migratory paths. Those who migrated from the African nations have a very different background to those who came directly from Gujarat.

'Many were born in East Africa and attended English-medium schools. They were not from rural backgrounds but from urban, and those [who] did come from villages usually had occupations such as merchants rather than farmers' (Harrison, 1978: 14). Again, this difference resonated within my immediate family, my father came to the UK direct from his rural village in the southern part of Gujarat; while my mother initially lived in Nairobi while in Kenya and only spent a few years in her home village in the same southern part of Gujarat before coming to Preston.

The Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic community set up the Gujarat Hindu Society Preston in 1966. The society was established with the initial aim of helping the Gujarati Indian Hindu community to pursue and maintain cultural traditions (Harrison, 1978). In the early years the events, festivals and celebrations that the Society held took place in peoples' homes and at other venues. In 1974, through subscriptions to the society and various fund-raising activities the society brought and converted an old school building in the Broadgate area of Preston. The area is to the south of Preston and borders the River Ribble. It is close to the city centre and public transport links. Broadgate is the area in which I grew up and it is where many the Gujarati speaking Hindu community lived and still live. The new premises became not only a community centre but also a place of worship as the society installed marble *murtis* of Krishna, with his consort Radha, Goddess Amba, the Gods Hanuman, Ganesh, and Shiva. At the turn of the 21st century the premises were expanded and the *murtis* of Rama, Sita and Lakshman were added. Today, the centre and temple consist of two large spaces, one is the main prayer hall and the other is a multipurpose space used for hosting weddings, cultural shows, lectures and talks from visiting gurus and holy persons, festivals and dinners. There is also a catering kitchen and several classrooms and a general office.

It is important to note that there is no one way to practice or one form of Hinduism, as Kim Knott highlights, 'the term 'Hinduism' implies a unified religious system, and indeed many Hindus and non-Hindus describe it in this way. Others, however, say there are many Hindu traditions even many 'Hinduisms': they are related to one another but remain different in important ways' (Knott, 2016:1). Hinduism has many traits that can allow it to be referred to as a religion, but there are also many that counter the western, Christian influenced understanding of what a religion is. Hinduism does have many gods and goddess but unlike other religions such as Islam or Christianity, there is no founder or central institution or one sacred text (Knott, 2016). Instead, there are numerous sacred texts and scriptures; and as Kim

Knott explains 'ritual, myth and ethics are important, but belief is of less significance, there being no core creed and few common teachings' (2016:103), which allows it be varied and diverse.

The practices and traditions I describe here are specific to the community in Preston. The form of Hinduism that is practiced is largely from traditions and celebrations found across the state of Gujarat but also some that are commonly celebrated across northern India. The context given here stems from my knowledge and participant at the temple. Key festivals that are celebrated by the community include *Holi* (the spring festival), *Diwali/Annkut* (Hindu New Year) and *Navaratri* (Nine Nights). There are also several smaller festivals (*Shivratri*, *Ramnavmi*, *Janmashtamin*) celebrated through the year, these festivities last a day or an evening.[xxv] These festivals are celebrated through the singing of *bhajans* (devotional hymns), the performance of *aarti* and food is offered as a gift then distributed to devotees as *prasad* (blessed food).[xxvi] They mainly focus on India's Republic Day on the 26th January and India's Independence Day on the 15th August. The Indian national anthem is sung as the Indian flag is raised. There is also a cultural show put on by the community which includes performances of classical Indian dances, traditional Gujarati folk dances like g*arba* and *dandia* (a stick dance) and singing. Periodically throughout the year the centre hosts *kathas* (sermons and recitals of religious stories and myths; and as well as Gujarati folk tales) by sages, gurus and other holy persons. In the late 1980s and early 2000s the centre hosted two nine-day Ramayana *kathas* by Morari Bapu, a popular *Kathakaar* (storyteller). These festivals and celebrations were a large part of my life growing up. Even now I tend to go back to Preston to celebrate *Diwali* and *Navratri*.

The society is led by a committee that comprises members of the Gujarati Indian Hindu community. The committee is nominated and voted for by society members who either pay an annual subscription or a one-off subscription charge to become lifetime members. Society members are mostly made up of Gujarati Indian Hindus living in Preston, as well as Gujarati Indian Hindus living elsewhere in the UK and abroad but who have links to the society and Preston. The committee is selected at the society's Annual General Meeting. For the first few years of the society, it was men who formed and ran the committee, though there is no constitutional bar on women joining. The current management committee still largely consists of men, but there are also two women. As of March 2016, there were two female members of the management committee and trustees. In addition to this there are four women who are members of staff at the centre. They are administrators and centre managers. The gender

dynamics are rather traditional in that many of the roles the women have in the life of the centre/temple are influenced by domestic duties. For example, there is a small group of women, some whom make up the participants of this study, who regularly help the priest maintain the shrines in the prayer hall. They prepare flower garlands and offerings of food for the deities. The women also help the priest with preparing the clothes for the deities, although it is only the priest who dresses the deities. They also help to prepare equipment and paraphernalia for *puja*. During large festivals, the women and the priest are joined by some men of the community in these preparations as well. The women partake in many festivals from the singing of devotional hymns to preparing food to be presented to the deities at *Annkut* to dancing the traditional folk dance of Gujarat *garba* during the nine-day festival of *Navratri*. Also, during these celebrations and others like *Bhajan Bhojan* many women help in the kitchen to serve *prasad* (blessed food) and to tidy up afterwards. I gained access to the participants partly through my mother who helps the priest with these activities alongside the other women. Other women who help to run events and assist in the running of the centre do so on a voluntary basis. Some women help in the running of the events at the centre, for example, some of the classes at the centre's Gujarati school are taught by women. Women have taken an active role in teaching the Bhagavad Gita. In these classes, attendees are taught the meaning and understanding of the Bhagavad Gita. There is also now a regular meeting for women set up at the centre, it is called '*Chai*, *Charcha* and Chocolate' (tea, chatter and chocolate). Their first meeting saw around 50 members of the community attend with participants' age ranging from their 20s to their 70s (GHS website, no date). During celebrations of India's Republic Day and Independence Day women have been involved in teaching younger girls dances for variety shows. Some also participate themselves and regularly take part in the *Garba–Raas* competition held by the Hindu Council of the North each September. Elderly women of the community regularly attend the Luncheon Club every Monday and Friday afternoons. There are also yoga and exercise classes in the afternoons for the women to attend. It is difficult to say if the women preform such duties and take on such roles because they think the men expect them to and they assume they are not supposed to take on the roles as leaders.

Even though I have not lived in Preston for a number of years, my connection with the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu community in Preston remains as my parents still reside in the city. It was strengthened further through my visits to the Gujarat Hindu Society every time I visited

Preston. Below I go into more detail of how I recruited the participants for this research, largely through my connections with the Gujarat Hindu Society.

3.3 Survey Research

The aims of the survey were to establish what kind of television Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women over the age of 18 are watching. My informal observations of how many Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women watch Indian transnational television is limited, as I had only observed a handful of women and these were intermittent over several years. However, through the observations I found that programmes such as Hindi serials and religious programmes, for example sermons from holy men and women were popular amongst some of the women. I also hoped to establish which specific programmes were being watched on the Indian television channels.

Surveys have many advantages, one such benefit is that they are an effective way of reaching large numbers of respondents, and they are also an appropriate method for gathering data such as the audiences' demographics, audiences' attitude towards television as well as ideas of how they behave towards television (Bertand & Hughes, 2005). Surveys are also an effective way to map the field by gathering quantitative data that can provide evidence towards an overarching view. Another advantage of surveys is transportability, allowing them to be conducted in various locations or distributed in several ways; such as through the post, carried out over the telephone or online (Schroeder, *et. al.,* 2003). Other advantages of conducting surveys are that they can be relatively quick to do, and a large amount of data can be gathered.

However, there are also several disadvantages, namely that surveys do not necessarily allow researchers to ask additional questions such as in-depth questions that can, potentially, lead to detailed responses specific to the participants. David Morley (1986) favoured interviews over questionnaires. Morley argued that 'the interviewing method (an unstructured discussion for a period between one and two hours) was designed to allow a fair degree of probing' (Morley, 1986:52). In other words, surveys do not allow for richer, detailed data to emerge; therefore, this method can only be used to gain an overview of viewing behaviour. I favoured this method as I hoped to obtain broad overview through quantitative data, of whether or not women, amongst this specific community were watching Indian language television, when and how

often they watched such television and what kind of programmes, or what kind of genre of programmes they watched. As I planned the survey alongside my other methods, I was aiming to gather quantitative data alongside the other methods and so I was aware there would be other opportunities to gather in-depth data.

I developed a small-scale pilot survey that was distributed amongst the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women in Preston. The key aims of designing and conducting the pilot survey allowed me to 'assess the clarity of the questions' (Hansen, *et al.,* 1998:247), the structure of the survey and generally find any problems with the survey that cannot be seen due to my intimate understanding of the survey (Hansen, *et al.,* 1998:247). The survey was a five-page document, consisting of questions that were a combination of closed or multiple choice. It was sent to six respondents through email and social media while eight were handed out to eligible participants at the Gujarat Hindu Society Centre on a Friday evening. I was also able to visit the homes of a couple of participants who also filled in the pilot survey. I informally asked the participants how they found the survey. By using feedback from the participants on the survey I then developed the full survey that was focused more on the participants' viewings of Indian television.

3.3.1 Survey

Based on the feedback from the pilot survey I decided to focus the survey on two main areas, firstly, general television consumption and secondly consumption of Indian language television. The final section asking for personal details remained from the pilot survey. The full survey was seven pages long, with questions written in English and Gujarati (Appendix 1). In addition to the translated questions, I decided to make as many of the questions as possible multiple choices, with the option of allowing the participants to include any answers that may not be included. In total there were 17 questions on the full survey. Seven of the total number of questions were two-part questions, with the first part being a closed question and the second part was either multiple choice or open to singular answers, i.e. the names of programmes they were watching. There were four yes/no closed questions, all of which were part of the two-part questions. The other closed questions included one ranking question, eleven multiple choice questions and five free text questions. The reason for including the multiple-choice questions was because during the pilot survey I found the participants seemed to be in a hurry and did not want to spend time thinking about the answers to the questions. Also, when asked if the participants could list British, American and Indian programmes they

had recently consumed, many had troubles remembering the names of programmes. It seemed a prompt was needed as to the kind (genre) of programme they may have watched. Another factor that led to the change in the types of question was that a number of older participants were confused as to what constituted American programming and British programming.

The survey was distributed online as well as in hard copy form. The front sheet was an information sheet (Appendix 2) on the study (again available in English and Gujarati). The information sheets outlined details as to who was doing the research, why and the institution to which the researcher had an affiliation. Alongside this information, there were also reassurances to the participant that the data collected was anonymised and procedures to be used if they wished to have their data withdrawn. The participants were requested to read the information sheet prior to filling in the survey. Once they had read and understood the information sheet, the participants were asked to give their consent. The consent form consisted of three questions and asked for the participant's signature. Once consent was given, I detached the form from the main questionnaire and filed it away from the questionnaire. The participants were given a copy of the information sheet once the questionnaire was completed.

3.3.2 Survey Findings and Analysis

A total of 32 surveys were received back in total, 28 hard copy surveys and four online surveys. I had originally planned on getting close to 100 responses across the two formats of the survey and so this number of responses is not ideal. I was naïve in my thinking that as a member of the community I would easily be able to get this number of responses because the participants would feel comfortable talking to me? During my planning I did not consider that there would be any hesitation or reluctance from the women to speak about television. I understand that the number of responses is very small, and it is not enough to make generalizable claims/arguments. However, I do argue that there is some valuable information embedded in the responses received and that this information can at least start to give us a picture of the television viewing landscape amongst this specific audience sector. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017:203) suggest that 'a sample size of thirty is held by many to be a minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data'. Also, I did not pursue more responses because I wanted to consider this quantitative data alongside

the data gathered with the other methods; which can provide different angles and approaches to looking and engagement practices of Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women.

Of the 32 received four were incomplete. Even though the 28 completed is a very small sample for generalisable conclusions to be drawn, they do however offer some insight into the viewing preferences of this small group of women. The following section highlights key findings from the data. From the 28 completed responses, the average age of the all the respondents of the survey was 50.9 years. This is a very high average but as I stated earlier, this was a result of the skewed sample largely being over the age of 45.

Total number of respondents	28
Place of birth, UK	6
Place of birth, India	13
Place of birth, elsewhere	9

Figure 4 Place of birth of Respondents

Figure 4 shows that most of the respondents (59%) said their place of birth was India, specifically the state of Gujarat. The remaining respondents (41%), whose place of birth was elsewhere, indicated principally East African countries like Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Out of these countries, most were born in Kenya. The respondents who stated their place of birth as the UK said they were born in Preston. Survey responses also revealed that those respondents who were born outside of the United Kingdom predominately arrived in the 1970s. Other demographic information showed that most of the respondents lived with their families. In total 22 (78.6%) of the respondents were born outside the United Kingdom.

Of the 28 respondents, only one stated they did not watch television; all remaining 27 respondents indicated that they do watch television on any platform be it live as it is broadcast, live streaming, on catch up TV, recorded etc. Eighteen of the twenty-seven respondents stated that they had watched television on transnational Indian channels in the last seven days up to taking the survey. Most of the participants (71%) stated that they watched television live as the programmes were being broadcast on a television set. Two participants streamed live television through websites like BBC iPlayer. The remaining participants either recorded broadcasts or used catch up websites on various devices.

No. of hours	No. of respondents	%
Less than 2 hours	7	25.93
2 – 4 hours	12	44.44
4 – 6 hours	6	22.22
6 – 8 hours	2	7.41

Figure 5 No. of hours of television watched on an average weekday (Monday – Friday)

No. of hours	No. of respondents	%
Less than 2 hours	4	14.81
2 – 4 hours	18	66.67
4 – 6 hours	4	14.81
6 – 8 hours	1	3.70

Figure 6 No. of hours of television watched on an average weekend (Saturday - Sunday)

Figures 5 and 6 show many of the respondents watch television for an average of two to four hours on weekdays and weekends. Analysis of the data reveals that the majority of the respondent hours of television viewing and how they watch television is in line with the larger British population according to the findings by Ofcom in their 2015 Communications Market report. The report states that 'traditional TV is still the preferred way of viewing TV' (Ofcom, 2015: 156) and is watched for 3 hours and 13 minutes per day (Ofcom, 2015: 146).

The 18 participants who stated they had watched Indian language programmes in the previous seven days running up to the survey were asked if they had watched any Indian language serials/dramas, religious programming or entertainment programmes. Five respondents stated they had watched all genres of programmes suggested. While two respondents listed all three genres and others as well. As figure 7, below, illustrates 17 (94%) of the 18 participants had watched an Indian serial/drama within the last seven days. This was followed by 12 participants stating they had watched some form of religious programming within the last seven days.

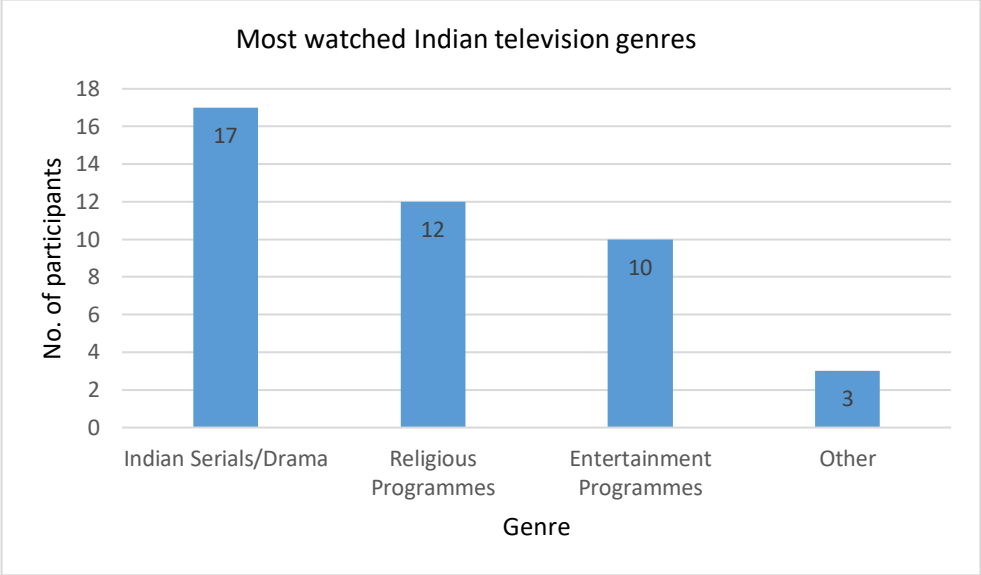

Figure 7 Respondents Consumption of Indian Language television in the seven days running up to the survey.

In total, the participants said they had watched 20 different serials in the seven days prior to taking the survey. These serials were broadcast on five main channels, Star Plus (seven serials), ZEE TV (three serials) and &TV (three serials) Colors (five serials) and Rishtey (one serial).[xxvii] Two of the most popular serials the participants named were *Udann* (*Flight*, 2014 -) and *Chakravartri Ashoka Samrat* (*The Great Emperor Ashoka*, 2015 – 2016), both broadcast on Colors. These serials were named by five participants each. The serials most cited on subscription-based channel were the family-based sagas, *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* (*This is Love*, 2013 -) and *Ek Veer Ki Ardaas… Veera* (*A Brothers' Prayer… Veera*, 2012 – 2015). Both serials are broadcast on Star Plus. It is not surprising Star Plus was commonly cited as the preferred channel on which to watch serials as that is its specialism. However, what is interesting is that it is a channel available only through subscription. The channel is available as part of all Sky television packages, unlike ZEE TV which requires an additional subscription. This also helps to explain why, even though ZEE TV was mentioned by respondents it was not as popular. These findings suggest that viewing behaviours are influenced by subscription fees. From my own experience I grew up watching and continue to watch on occasion soap operas. These have largely been British and Australian productions when they were broadcast on terrestrial television. I have not held a subscription to satellite television, therefore I had very limited access to the Hindi language programmes the participants watch. The lack of subscription was largely due to financial reasons which relates to Dudrah's assertions around accessibility and affluence. Also, as Mishra (2002); Moorti (2007); Somani and Doshi's (2016) suggested in Chapter 2, there is a generational difference in terms of wanting and needing to reconnect

with culture produced in India. The studies highlighted how younger generations are acculturated to cultures of America or in my case the UK (and some American culture) and prefer these cultural forms. For me this was because growing up we did not have the money to pay for satellite television or cable television therefore I grew up with mostly British terrestrial channels and the American and Australian programme they broadcasted. Occasionally there would be Indian language programming, but this was rare or on an annual basis, it was not consistent/regular.

A total of 12 (66.7%) participants stated they had watched religious programming. This category referred to the faith-based programme on channels like Aastha. Programmes include broadcasts of *kirtans* (devotional hymn singing), yoga exercises and mediation, lectures by spiritual leaders and other holy men and women. The participants indicated that the religious programmes that were most watched were the broadcasts of the preacher Morari Bapu. The religious – faith channel – Aastha often broadcasts the preacher's weeklong recitals of the Hindu mythological epic, the Ramayana. Morari Bapu travels the world holding these recitals which are often broadcast live. The recital of Ramayana by Morari Bapu can come under a larger, overarching category called *kathas* (recitals of stories or sermons). Participants cited other preachers whose *kathas* they watched, including two other well-known preachers, Ramesh Oza and Chinmayanand Bapu.

There were 10 (55.6%) participants who stated they had watched entertainment programmes in the seven days running up to the survey being conducted. The participants mostly listed reality shows, some of which were the India versions of British formats. For example, *India's Got Talent* was being broadcast at the time on the Colors channel and was watched by six participants. *Nach Baliye* (*Dance Partner*, 2005 -, Star One/Star Plus*)* was cited by four respondents. The programme is a reality dance programme on Star Plus where celebrity couples compete with each other each week. It is similar to BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* (2004 -, BBC), the only difference being that the celebrity is not coupled up with a professional dancer, rather they are competing with either their husband, wife or partner. Again, similar to serials, the programme broadcast on the free channel seemed to be watched by more participants than the paid for channels. These statistics are in line with research conducted by BARB (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board). In 2015 BARB found the broadcaster networks such as BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Viacom (Channel 5) and UKTV had the largest share of audiences. These broadcasters either provide all free channels or they have a combination of channels

that are free to view, and some are subscription based (de Groose, Douglas, McGolpin & Robins, 2016). The channels cited by the participants were mostly those that were available for free. However, to access these channels a Sky box or similar subscription digital television service provider set top box was needed. However, since conducting the survey availability of Indian language channels had changed for a short amount of time; and at least three Indian language channels were available through Freeview (without any form of subscription), Rishtey, Rishtey Cineplex and Colors. It is unclear if these programmes were the ones that were watched the most by the participants as the questions in the survey did not ask for this kind of information. However, it seems that this might need to be a specific question that should be included in future surveys/work in this area.

The findings do begin to suggest that Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women, over the age of 45, living in Preston have moved away from English language programming and are watching transnational television from India. Indian language family-based serials on channels dedicated to such programmes were emphasised by the participants. The survey did not ask respondents to list what kind of English language programming they currently watch or used to watch, however, in Chapter 6, I discuss findings from my interviews where I asked my participants about their consumption of English language programming prior to their consumption of Indian programming. This gives some indication as to the kind of English language programmes some of the women in the community were watching.

As I was recruiting respondents to take part in the survey, many of them informally commented on the lack of Gujarati language programmes available. This need for a Gujarati language television channel in the UK is interesting. It is an idea to examine in terms of Hamid Naficy's (1993) argument of how television programmes made by exiled Iranians in the US for other exiled Iranians emphasises and is a constant reminder of their minority status (Naficy, 1993:94). The informal comments made by some of the women suggest that the lack of specific language programming similarly made the women feel like they are constantly reminded of their minority status. This status is highlighted to them in two ways. Firstly, it is in comparison to the dominant white British culture and society within which they live and in relation to what they have seen on television in the UK prior to the availability of transnational channels. Secondly, the minority status is further emphasised, this time culturally and linguistically, with the arrival of transnational television from India that is predominately in Hindi. From the observations and informal discussions that took place there was the

suggestion of frustration amongst the women around the lack of Gujarati specific channels. There is an implied knowledge of other cultures, regions, nations and minority Indian languages having such provision. For example, networks such as Star and ZEE TV have specific channels dedicated to programming in languages such as Punjabi, Tamil or Bengali. These channels are available here in the UK and therefore possibly led to puzzlement as to why there is no channel for them (at the time of writing there is no Gujarati channel available in the UK). The ZEE network did have a Gujarati language TV channel in the past which was closed in 2009. However, this was only available to the Gujarati community in India; it was not transnational. Today, there are other Gujarati channels dedicated to news, entertainment and music but again are only available in India.

3.3.3 Limitations and Reflections

After conducting the survey, several limitations came to light which was mainly due to the location. The event that was held at the Gujarat Hindu Society at the time I was conducting the research limited my access to women of a wider age range. The aim of the survey was to collect data from a broad age range from the age of 18 years upwards, but due to the location where I conducted the survey in person, most of the respondents were over the age of 45. It was also at this site that I noted that several women were very reluctant to take part in the research. I explained to them what I was doing, why I was doing it and that all information is kept confidential and anonymous, but they still refused. A place of religious worship was an inappropriate place to ask women about their television viewing habits. Another limitation of the survey was that some of the questions and instructions were not clear. They needed to be rephrased so the respondents had a clear understanding of the question and how to fill in their answer.

While conducting the survey, a possibly somewhat naïve assumption about their only being two different generations of women amongst the diaspora was challenged as I spoke to a group of women who did not fit into directly into the two generations I had assumed there to be. My original assumption was that there was a generation of women who migrated to Preston as adults from India or West Africa (generation 1.0). The other generation of women were those who were born in the UK from the 1970s onwards (generation 2.0). Only a small percentage of women I was able to recruit to participant in the survey were from this group. I came to the realisation that there is an “in-between” generation of women. These women were born in India or West Africa and came to the UK as babies or toddlers. Therefore, most of

their lives have been spent in the UK. I will call this group of women “generation 1.5”. Unfortunately, due the number of respondents to the survey I was unable to establish general differences between the generations. But the data does begin to suggest that the women who watched the most British and American television were part of generation 2.0. Earlier in the chapter I begin to suggest how my acculturation to British and other English language television has had an influence on me to a point whereby even when I could get subscriptions to networks and platforms, I still maintain my consumption of English-language programmes. This seems to begin to provide some evidence for the assertions made in the previous chapter by Moorti (2007); Mishra (2002) and Somani and Doshi (2016) about the distancing of younger generations to culture and other media that connects them to India.

An area of sensitivity that might have been of concern in the survey was surrounding the question of when and why the respondents arrived in the UK if they had not been born in the UK. There was an option to tick a box stating they ‘preferred not to say’. As there was a possibility of discussing topics that may be considered sensitive or taboo it could hinder natural responses or stop any responses from being given. In order to circumvent this, I assured the participants they were all to be anonymised, and in the write up of the project, they were given a case study number at random which is always used to refer to them. In addition to these measures, if there is to be any questioning from myself, I was sure to phrase the questions appropriately so as not to cause any offence.

Above I have described and discussed the findings from the quantitative phase of the research. The main findings acknowledged Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu women in Preston over 45 watch television live as it is broadcast, much of it is on transnational Indian channels. The findings highlighted the women watch the same amount of television as the national average. I also outline how the women are heavily engaged in the religious and cultural life of the community. In the following two sections I turn my attention to the qualitative phase of the audience study beginning with the participant observations.

3.4 Participant Observations

The second part of the audience study was the participant observation. The observations had strong ethnographical elements whereby I joined the participants in their daily viewing of the prime-time Hindi serials. It was the participants who dictated to me when and where they watched television. By conducting observations in the homes of my participants I was able to

make the 'invisible visible' (Hansen, *et al.,* 1998: 43-44). In this study, I am bringing to light a specific aspect of Gujarati-speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women's home life; that is how and when they watch television. Conducting the observations in their homes also allowed me to examine the behaviour of the participants in their natural environment (Bertand & Hughes, 2005:83).

Media scholars have used a variety of approaches to investigate different television audiences. In the early 1980s, James Lull (1980) argued for a more ethnographic approach to television audience studies. This approach allowed researchers to move into the domestic space where most viewers were watching television. Ethnography was the antithesis of other research approaches like interviews and surveys that maintained the researcher's position on the outside. In other words, ethnography allows researchers to evaluate and examine the viewing practices of television audiences 'as it happens in the natural situations of everyday life' (Schroder, *et. al.,* 2003:147) as opposed to examining the practices from outside these natural settings. Ethnography involves fieldwork that allows a variety of methods, such as participant observation, interviews, and more recently personal narratives, to be combined to give a rounded perspective of the field that is being studied. Thus, making it an ideal method to use for this study.

Thomas Tufte highlights a change in conducting media audience studies in the 1980s brought on by 'the epistemological shift represented by the development of cultural studies' (Tufte, 2000:26). A detailed discussion of the work of three scholars that embraced ethnography for their television audience studies will follow; the first will be Marie Gillespie's (1995) study of what role television plays in the formation of identities in South Asian youths living in Southall, West London. The second study will be Purnima Mankekar's (1999) exploration of lower-middle-class Indian women and their consumption of the state-owned Indian television channel Doordarshan. Finally, I will discuss Thomas Tufte's (2000) study of Brazilian women's viewing of telenovelas.

Gillespie conducted her research in Southall. Before beginning her research, Gillespie became familiar with the area through her teaching as she had worked there for four years in the 1980s. Her familiarity with the area developed during a small-scale research project she conducted as part of her teaching degree. Unfortunately, this was an unpublished dissertation and so there are no further details regarding how small the sample was but there is the

suggestion here that small scale studies can provide interesting findings. This experience allowed her to learn Punjabi and gain some insight into the youth cultures amongst young people in the South Asian diaspora. The research was conducted between 1988 – 1991, during which time Gillespie lived in Southall. She continued to teach throughout her research because it gave her access to young people and she was able to build and 'establish relationships of trust and reciprocity' (Gillespie, 1995:61). She describes the ethnography as being in three stages, which overlapped (Gillespie, 1995:61). That it, Gillespie undertook her fieldwork one after another beginning with the survey, the participant observations and then the interviews. After laying the ground-work, Gillespie began to visit the young people in their homes and take a more active part in the lives of her respondents. This led to the participant observations and Gillespie conducting structured interviews. The final part of her research was focused on her sixth form students in the classroom as she recorded casual conversations about television (Gillespie, 1995). It is important to point out that this study has been heavily influenced by Gillespie. My own research method designed was largely informed by Gillespie hence the numerous similarities between the two studies.

For Gillespie ethnography allowed her to investigate the youth of the Southall Punjabi community in a way in which other research methods did not. Gillespie argues 'traditional models of research have above all failed to approximate the lived experiences of audiences and to deliver the kinds of insights required to understand the complexities of TV and its audience embedded in wider social, political and economic contexts' (Gillespie, 1995:53-54). In other words, ethnography allows the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the detailed negotiations that occur when audiences watch television, while it also allows these detailed negotiations to become visible. Through her study, Gillespie outlined how ethnography enabled her to examine a community of young South Asians in great detail and over extensive periods of time. For Gillespie, the focus was on identity, as I state above, and its relation to media use. Thus, she needed to understand the whole of the people in their everyday life. Unlike Gillespie, this study is about the specific mechanism of media use which I assume is influenced by the participants' identity. In other words, this study is focused on how a viewer's identity might influence them to watch television in a certain way; for this reason, I limit my ethnographic approach to examine women watching prime time Hindi serials.

Purnima Mankekar (1999) undertook ethnographic research with Indian viewers of the state-owned television channel, Doordarshan. Mankekar conducted her research in the early 1990s,

and her informants lived in two lower-middle-class neighbourhoods of the Indian capital, New Delhi. The main participants consisted of twenty-five families who were mostly Hindu as well as some Sikh and Muslim families. Mankekar was introduced to the neighbourhoods and participants through personal contacts and acquaintances, and therefore the informants were not chosen randomly (Mankekar, 1999:15). She states that her research allowed her 'to understand the complex, sometimes unpredictable, links between televisual text, viewers' interpretations of them, and the viewers' life experiences' (Mankekar, 1999:17). It also gave her insight into how the viewers use television to address what is going on in their own lives (Mankekar, 1999:21). Mankekar argues that she used ethnography 'not to provide an empirical "record" of places of persons, but to explore how the production and reception of television texts are embedded conjunctures. Indeed, the pretext of my ethnography is to evoke the contexts in which texts are interpreted and to demonstrate the inextricability of text from context' (Mankekar, 1999:20). In addition to the participant observations of the families, Mankekar supplemented her research by conducting interviews with television producers, actors, journalists, activists and policy makers. Similarly, Gillespie, the method chosen by Mankekar allowed her to discuss the complex way in which her participants watch television. Mankekar establishes how her participants use television to talk about their everyday lives and in some cases, talk about difficult subjects like marriage problems, issues around arranged marriage and money troubles. Both Mankekar and Gillespie's studies highlight the in-depth data that can be gathered through ethnography but also a range of ethnographic methods including participant observations, interviews and focus groups.

Mankekar acknowledges that her position and life experiences were quite different to those of her participants which came to light during her fieldwork. She understood early on that these differences had great potential but also a limitation in the relationships she formed with her participants. Mankekar outlines examples of where she 'was marked by tension and suspicion' (Mankekar, 1999:35) but also as a mystery. They could not understand how she could leave her husband in the United States or how she had been married for six years and still did not have any children (Mankekar, 1999:33). It seems that Mankekar had not realised that her circumstances and her ability to work and travel without her husband was regarded with suspicion by her participants. Mankekar spent some time during her research trying to convince her participants that her husband was happy for her to spend time in India. This begins to highlight the potential problems in terms of the privilege and power the ethnographer has in relation to their participants. In this situation Mankekar has much more

freedom in her marriage compared to her participants and as Mankekar acknowledges, it can lead to mistrust between the researcher and subject.

Thomas Tufte's ethnographic study centred on television consumption by low-income communities in three different parts of Brazil. The focus of Tufte's study was to examine the relationship between watching telenovelas and how it fits into the everyday life of viewers, as well as explore how the content of telenovelas may or may not influence the production of meaning (Tufte, 2000:26). Tufte's initial data collection occurred over a two-month period in 1991, where he conducted observations of local women watching telenovelas. Over a six-year period (1993 – 1998) Tufte followed up the initial research with regular field trips back to Brazil. In addition to the observations Tufte also conducted structured interviews with 13 women who formed his main respondents. He also undertook a survey, conducted a genre analysis of 12 episodes of telenovela *The Rubbish Queen*, and used a range of secondary resources such as newspaper articles and clippings.

Prior to conducting the research, Tufte had spent a period of six years studying and working in Brazil and Latin America. This experience allowed him to develop extensive knowledge and understanding of Brazilian culture and society. The understanding and knowledge gained from his studies conducted during this time reiterated the practical use of ethnography and allowed Tufte to build a network of contacts for this study (Tufte, 2000). Tufte became fully immersed into the lives of his participants so he could thoroughly understand their daily routines, culture and society; as opposed to taking an approach where the researcher is an outsider and simply observes from a distance (Tufte, 2000:43).

The methods of this thesis draw on the methods employed by the studies discussed above. Gillespie goes to great pains to outline the differences between ethnography and 'ethnographic methods'. For Gillespie, ethnography is based on fieldwork that is focused on long term, intensive participant observation (Gillespie, 1995). Tufte also acknowledges that 'time is an influential factor when seeking a deeper understanding of a society, a culture and a people' (Tufte, 2000: 34). In other words, the longer a researcher can spend in the field the better their knowledge of that culture/society/people will be. Gillespie (citing Pike, 1966) argues that eighteen months is the standard length of fieldwork required to attain the "emic" or "native" point of view' (Gillespie, 1995:55, emphasis original). However, Tufte

acknowledges that this is variable depending on the study and whether the researcher is familiar with the field (Tufte, 2000: 34).

Jorgensen (1989) suggests that participant observation is a good method to use when one is exploring a culture or phenomenon that we know very little about, which is very much the case with the women at the centre of this project. The advantage of participant observation is that we can see for ourselves what is going on in the setting we are examining. However, there are a number of disadvantages to participant observations, for example, the observations could be seen as biased because the observations will be only from the researchers' standpoint. Thomas Tufte (2000), James Lull (1990) and Marie Gillespie (1995) all reflect on how their presentation of fieldwork represented the whole picture and not just the researcher's perspective. In order to avoid bias and offer a broader picture the researchers used a combination of methods including surveys and textual analysis. Similarly, to these studies I also used additional methods as I have begun to discuss in this chapter. Another disadvantage could be that the researcher could influence the behaviour of the participants. In order to counteract this influence, Tufte argues that it is better to be integrated into the everyday life of the participants, so they become used to the researcher as one of them as opposed to an outsider (2000:43). Gillespie states that during the two years of her field work the participants eventually began to ignore the notebook and video/audio recorder she carried (Gillespie, 1995:62).

As I have highlighted throughout this chapter and partly in the introduction my integration into this community comes from personal experience, having been born and brought up in Preston. I have known the participants who have been involved in this study for many years. They are neighbours, acquaintances and family friends. My integration and the long-term relationships I have with the participants are further emphasised by the names given to them. In Indian communities, it is the custom that family friends and elders of the community are given affectionate names such as aunty (*masi/mami*) and uncle (*mama/kaka*), granddad (*dada*) or grandma (*ba*). In Gujarati, different names are given to aunts and uncles, which indicate how they are related to you or when used in reference to family friends. The names refer to whether the person in question is a relative or a friend of your mother or father. For example, *mama* is the name given to your maternal uncle, and the name given to his wife is *mami*. The name given to your paternal uncle is *kaka* and his wife, *kaki*. When the titles are given to family friends, they are a way in which the family is informally extended, and in turn so is the

affection. Therefore, the lack of formality these titles bring allows me to enter a relaxed, friendly and informal environment.

I was able to organise and coordinate the repeated observation of six participants for the study. The observations took in each of the participant's homes. I joined the participants at times they stated they watched the Hindi serials the most. I observed the participants twice over two consecutive days with each session lasting approximately two to three hours. In hindsight this was not long enough for the observations with the number of participants I managed to recruit.

In order to carry out the detailed part of the research I recruited six women over the age of 50 to be the focus of my research. As I have stated above, initially it was not my intention to focus on older women. However, after receiving the responses from the survey I considered how under-researched older television audiences are, especially those from a diasporic community. I decided to focus on older women's responses for the more in-depth part of the study. The participants were recruited from those who completed the full survey and had stated they were watching similar serials at the time the survey was conducted. I describe all the participants to be part of the first generation of Indian Hindu diasporic women to arrive in the UK. All of the participants were in their late teens or adults when they arrived in the UK. Even though this is a small sample, it allows me to examine the finer details of the way in which these women watch television. More information on each participant is provided in Appendix 3. Prior to beginning the first observation session with each participant, they were asked to read the study information sheet and to complete the consent form. All but one participant agreed to the observations being video recorded. Alongside this, I also made notes throughout all the observations. The recordings were used to help with the transcribing and write up of the research.

3.4.1 Limitations and Reflections

The community is small and quite tightly knit which means there is an element of safety already in place. Therefore, I was already acquainted with many of the respondents and participants of this research. In some cases, I have known the respondents for years, and I have been a regular guest to their homes, as have my parents. Consequently, there is an established relationship with some participants. Other participants are siblings, mothers and grandmothers of my friends who no longer reside in Preston but I have kept a form of

acquaintance with the family, there is still a form of acquaintance there. There were also a number of participants with whom I was acquainted through the same *samaj*. This is the Shree Prajapati Association – Preston. It is a small community that I have grown up with, and my family (grandparents and parents) were some of the earliest members. An additional safety strategy that I put into place was that I gave my parents (who still reside in Preston and whose home I was using as a base for my observations and interviews) an information sheet that detailed where I was (address of the observation location), the timings of the visit, my mobile number (that was fully charged at all times), and name and contact phone number of the participant. This information sheet was then disposed of after each session.

Due to the time constraints a long-term intensive participatory observation was not possible. However, as I have discussed above, I felt that long intensive time in the field was not needed because of my prior knowledge of the cultural rituals/status of the community. I therefore ended up conducting the different stages of my field work at different times. I distributed the survey in early June 2015. These were the hard copies and then released by online survey in late July to August 2015. The participant observation and interviews took place between August 2015 and February 2016. I conduct the textual analysis in between February and March 2016. On reflection I do acknowledge that I perhaps should have spent some time getting to know the community of women more around their television consumption as opposed to relying on the cultural knowledge of the community I had gained as a member. Had I undertaken this focused form of observation I may have had more responses to the survey and developed better strategies to counteract the resistance to talk about television by the participants.

The sample size of the study is problematic. I understand that with such a small sample generalisation cannot be made. However, such research can still be valuable other studies such as Kaur's (2005) study of British South Asian film audiences highlighted; as did the work of Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2004). One way to overcome the small sample size is perhaps to conduct a longitudinal approach to fieldwork with the same group of participants, as Gigi Durham did with her research. Unfortunately, I was unable to take this approach due to limitations of time. However, I do use a range of different methods in the study as I stated in the introduction to this chapter. I acknowledge that I had always planned on using all these methods but, after losing confidence I felt that the number of methods used gained greater

importance in the study. I see merit in mixed methods as it can provide interesting and complimentary results and analysis this approach can produce.

On reflection I understand I could have implemented several other strategies to gather more data for example observing the participants for one or two weeks each would have provided a some more substantial evidence regarding routine and differences in the participants' viewing practices and behaviour. Another strategy I could have implemented but would have added to the number of methods I used, was asking the participants to complete a viewing diary for a month, whilst also doing the observations.

Another limitation of the observations but also the interviews is the lack of distance that was maintained between myself and the participants. I relate to the women in this research as my superiors and I look up to them with great respect and reverence. This stems from my cultural upbringing and although advantageous in gaining access to the community; it has also been a hinderance in conducting the actual fieldwork. This relationship has led to a power imbalance, an aspect of the fieldwork I had not fully grasp going into the field. Kalwant Bhopal (2009) argued that researchers can try to address the power imbalance but it is so complicated that I can never fully be equal between the researcher and the participant. 'Power is multi-layered, dynamic and changing. As researchers we have to be critical of notion of power – who holds it and why and how it affects the research process – as we have to question those who speak for and on behalf of marginalised communities' (Bhopal, 2009:193). Researchers who are part of the community that they are researching should try to maintain distance between them and their participants. Even though some distance was created it was not maintained throughout the fieldwork. Bhopal (2009) stated that in order to distance herself from her participants she manufactured distance by asking her participants to explain terms and ideas that could have been taken for granted by both because of their shared cultural backgrounds. Another strategy Bhopal implemented was to remind the participant what the focus of the research is and that it is the voice of the participant that is the focus. I did implement Bhopal's suggestion of asking for explanations but not consistently or throughout the observations or interviews. One final strategy Bhopal suggests is opening up and being self-reflective with the participant. I know now that I could have given much more of what I know, what I understand to help bring out more information from the participants. I could have talked about my observations of seeing lots of women watching more television originally from India and be reflective about the questions it raised.

This section highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of using participant observation to explore a television audiences' viewing practices. It highlights the ability of the observations to bring to light the viewing practices of Indian diasporic women but it also examined the limitations of the method, such as researcher bias. In the following section I scrutinise the use of interviews which formed the second part of the qualitative phase of the audience study.

3.5 Interviews

The observations were then followed up by in-depth informal semi-structured interviews. I conducted the interviews myself between October 2015 and February 2016; they were recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes to an hour. The interviews were translated into English, and square brackets are used to indicate where responses have been translated from Gujarati in the transcripts. Interviews, like other qualitative research methods, provide the researcher with in-depth knowledge and understanding quantitative methods do not. They allow the researcher to place the interviewee at the heart of the research and are flexible enough to be tailored to individuals (Mytton *et al.,* 2016). The interviews were conducted in the homes of each participant, and I asked the questions in English and Gujarati. The main reason for this was to make the interviews feel like natural everyday conversations and allow the participant to feel as comfortable as possible (Schroder *et al.,* 2003:143).

I began by interviewing Participants 1 and 2 in October 2015. However, due to my inexperience of interviewing, I felt I was not asking the right questions as I was not able to follow up the question in any manner. As I conducted the interviews, I also became aware that my questions had words and phrases that the participants were not familiar with and therefore I had to change them. The participants were asked a range of questions on a number of different areas regarding their television viewing. As an ice breaker, I began by asking the participants about their history of television viewing, then moved on to questions about their present-day television viewing habits. I then moved on to ask about specific types of programmes like generic Hindi serials, English language soap operas and religious Hindi serials. The same questions were asked for each kind of drama. Questions were also based around trying to gain an understanding of how the participants understood *darshan.*

I was worried about asking my participants if they considered any male characters in the serials to be handsome. This line of questioning largely stemmed from an earlier idea for the thesis that wanted to consider if *darshan* might be a way of looking at handsome men that is more acceptable amongst this audience. In other words, I was considering exploring is *darshan* was being used as a substitute for sexually charged looking at men because of the religious context of *darshan* is see as more agreeable. This line of questioning was widely received well and answered by all but one participant – Participant 3. It is hard to say why the participant was reluctant to give a reply, but I believe it could be that her husband was in the same room at the time of the interview. Tufte also found similar bias while he was conducting his interviews, stating that the reactions of the husbands of his participants could have limited how much the women confided in him (Tufte, 2000). I also argue that there was another dimension to Participant 3's reluctance to answer the questions about male characters; that is that Participant 3 is the eldest of all my participants. What led me to believe that age is a factor is that other participants, Participant 2 and 6, also had someone else in the room; in Participant 2's case during the first interview the participant's elderly aunt was in the room and with Participant 6 her husband was in the room; yet they did answer the questions. I was very conscious of conducting the interviews in the women's home and in a room that they felt comfortable in.

3.5.1 Limitations and Reflection

Perhaps due to my lack of experience of such situations it did not occur to me to suggest conducting the interview in a different room, it only occurred to me much later. Another reason why I did not suggest using a different room was because of the ease the participants felt having their husbands and other members of the family in the room. Subconsciously I took this to mean that they were comfortable having other people in the room while I conducted the interview. On reflection I understand there is much more that could have been done to counter this ethical issue. For example, put into practice Bhopal's (2009) strategies. Further to this, prior to conducting the interviews I could have begun talking about the different topics the interview would cover but on an informal setting. Get the participants used to the idea of discussing these ideas with me.

So far in this chapter I have outlined the quantitative and qualitative audience research methods I have used to examine the audience. In the next section I turn my attention to my use of textual analysis to examine the visuals of the serials under investigation.

3.6 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis stems from literary studies where the focus is on the text. Many studies of different media texts have utilised the method to determine what meanings or readings are embedded in texts. In relation to examining film and television programmes, textual analysis allows researchers to scrutinize the visual and aural elements of the text in question to establish how many ways a text can be interpreted. Alan McKee (2003) notes that it is useful method to use to understand not only the dominant culture that surrounds us but also subcultures and different ways of sense making that is beyond hegemonic conventions. In other words, textual analysis can be useful tool to help us learn of how texts are understood by different cultures. I highlighted in Chapter 2 how many of the conclusions in the studies were drawn from textual analysis, namely Mulvey (1975), Prasad (1999) and Vasudevan (2000). Also, in the chapter I was critical of these studies as they produced abstract theorisations of audience responses and interpretations of the text. In order to avoid the danger of following this track in this study, I analyse my findings from the textual analysis with the responses gathered from the participants during the interviews. This approach borrows from other studies that also combine empirical data with textual analysis. For example, David Morley's (1980) seminal study *The Nationwide Audience*, began with an analysis of the two episodes of Nationwide that were shown to different audiences of differing demographics as part of the study. Morley used a semiotic approach in his analysis of the programme, an approach I also use and discuss in more detail below. Tufte (2000) also engaged in textual analysis of Brazilian telenovelas, predominately to establish how they differ from American soap operas. Unlike Morley, however, Tufte's approach focused on narrative and the characteristics of social interaction in the programmes (Tufte, 2000).

There are many different approaches to textual analysis depending on what the focus of the analysis is. For the purposes of this project, I argue that television serials do give viewers the opportunity to take *darshan* from religious figures as well non-religious characters. Therefore, in order to establish if these moments of *darshan* are constructed in the Hindi serials the participants watched during the observations, I conducted an analysis of the mise-en-scene. This blended approach was taken because *darshan* and darshanic looking are embedded into the serials through mise-en-scene. Chapter 2 outlined several codes and conventions that are used to construct moments of *darshan* in Indian films, as established by Prasad, Vasudevan and Lutgendorf. The codes and conventions are:

- Full frontal framing of the object of *darshan* or darshanic looking – what Philip Lutgendorf (1995) describes as tableaux moments.
- The visuals emphasise the eyes from which *darshan* and/or darshanic looking is taken and given.
- The above convention then gave opportunities for a two-way ocular exchange between the viewer and the object of *darshan/*darshanic looking.
- It is the object of *darshan*/darshanic looking that has the power and will instigate when the two-way exchange can occur.
- The moment of *darshan/*darshanic looking is mediated by other characters or the director.

I carried out textual analysis on episodes of the serials I watched with the participants during the participant observations. From these episodes I was able to establish opportunities for *darshan* to occur from an image of a deity, non-religious characters both prominent characters and male leads. However, there were no opportunities presented of take *darshan* from an actor playing the role of a deity, I do discuss this idea in relation to ephemeral aspects of the serial, namely the title card.

I further argue that these opportunities are laden with political meaning grounded in right wing Hindu nationalist ideology. Therefore, in order to examine the serials through this lens I apply a semiotic approach. In the introduction I cited Banaji's assertion that the daily life in India has been overtaken by 'the semiotics of Indian fascism' (2018:334). For Barthes (1973:117) a myth is 'a system of communication, that it is a message. This allows on to perceive that myth cannot possible be an object, a concept, or an idea'. Myths are created through building up literal, denotative meanings of signs to create what Barthes referred to as second order semiological system' (Barthes, 1973:123). When this occurs, the sign becomes what Barthes (1973:126) refers to as 'form'. The form is 'empty', it is as if the meaning has been taken away. Consequently, because its empty the producer or viewer/reader fills it with their own meaning - which Barthes calls signification. For Barthes the form does not replace the initial meaning it is only weakened. In other words, the initial meaning remains but it is not front and centre. In order for myths to work we must understand the following, first, that 'myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear' (emphasis original, Barthes, 1973:131); second, myths gain traction to becoming ideological tools through repetition; finally myths are not fixed concepts, they can 'alter, disintegrate, disappear completely' (Barthes, 1973:130). In other words, myths do not hide the literal meaning as

acknowledged above, but instead twist the meaning so a sign can be embedded with more meaning that originally thought. These myths gain broader cultural understandings through repeated use in media, culture and broader discourse. Through this repeated use do significations become temporarily fixed. It is for these reasons that alongside highlighting the conventions of the serials that construct tableaux scenes; I will also examine the connotative and mythic signs embedded in the prime-time Hindi serials to help understand the appropriation of darshan by the Hindu right.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological framework that has been undertaken in this study. The methods that have been utilised in this research allow me to gain detailed insight into the lives of Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women. The chapter locates the research in the city of Preston and contextualises the Indian Hindu community in the city. The discussion introduces and highlights the importance of the Gujarat Hindu Society temple and community centre to the community as a whole but also to my participants. By establishing this context, I was able to discuss my own position as a Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic woman and my relationship with the community and the participants. As an insider I was able to gain access to the community and it implied an established understanding of the history and culture of my participants.

The chapter then outlined the different phases of data collection and highlighted that due to time constraints a full ethnography was not possible and so a range of methods that were heavily influenced by ethnography was implemented. The survey aimed to collect data from a broad demographic within the female Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic community. However, as I discussed in the chapter, the was limited mainly because of the location of where the survey was conducted. The chapter highlights how through the use of participant observations and interviews I was able to examine the television viewing practices of these women closely. It also discusses some of the limitations around one of the interview themes, women and desire. This chapter also outlined the strategy I implemented to move away the heavily abstract and theorised debates of looking examined in chapter 1. Therefore, I brought together interviews with the textual analysis. In the following analytical chapters I will use the methods outlined above to examine what factors can influence different ways of looking at television.

Chapter 4 - *Darshan* on Television

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, and the next, I focus on how the television programmes. This chapter examines the visual and aural elements of the serials. I will discuss how the serials present viewers with different opportunities to take *darshan*. These opportunities focused on images of Hindu deities as the object of *darshan*, as well as, non-religious characters. I seek to understand how these opportunities position the viewer, and I argue that they can be read in multiple ways; for example, an initial surface reading of the opportunities represents *darshan* as a religious act. A deeper reading of the scenes represents a subtext influenced by a right-wing Hindu nationalist agenda. I argue that the serials largely promote an idealised image of what it is to be Indian; which is again an influence of the Hindu right. The idealised Indian is presented as someone who is Hindu that follow traditions from Sanskrit based, north Indian texts, and grounded in caste-based hierarchies. The idealised Indian Hindu is further highlighted to be highly educated and from a wealthy, industrialist/entrepreneurial middle class urban extended family. I then turn to responses from my participants, first of all to gauge their understanding of *darshan* and whether or not it can be taken through the television screen; and second of all, to understand how they negotiate between their understanding of *darshan* and the position the serials place the viewers. In other words, what impact, if any, do the underlying subtext of the scenes have on the participants looking and engagement with the serials. I suggest that the participants need to be darshanically engaged, and looking at the screen in some way, either fully focused or partially. What I mean, is that *darshan* is more a form of engagement, rather than a way of looking. There needs to be some form of intention to take *darshan* within the participant.

In the first section, I begin my analysis of the serials by focusing on how two different sub-genres (a family-based serial and a mythological serial) of the serials presented viewers with an opportunity to take *darshan* from an image of a Hindu deity. The section then moves on to discuss how an opportunity to take *darshan* from an actor playing the role of a deity is presented. The section will also begin to highlight how these opportunities are embedded with a Hindu right-wing subtext. In the third section, I will examine how the serials frame non-religious characters through a darshanic lens. Beginning with an analysis of a scene from a religious serial I will then move on to discuss the framing of male characters in family-based serials. The section will also continue the discussion of how these constructs of *darshan* have messages from the Hindu right underlying them. In the final section, I will examine the participants responses to questions about their understanding of *darshan* and television.

4.2 *Darshan* from Images

In Chapter 2 I discuss the work of Lawrence Babb (1981) who highlighted several conventions of *darshan* being presented in film. The conventions Babb mentioned were the full frontal shot of the deity, as well as, the way in which viewpoint shots and point of view shots within a scene are intercut. Another convention that was also discussed in Chapter 2 is the tableau moment or tableaux scene. Philip Lutgendorf (1995) argued that in the *Ramayan* (1987), the camera, would often pause on a full frontal shot of the actor playing the character of Ram. This shot tended to be the climax of a scene and allowed viewers to take *darshan* from this character. Ravi Vasudevan (2000) discussed the use of music in relation to scenes of *darshan* towards a non-religious character in the film *Pyassa* (*Craving*). The implication of using music in such a scene connotes acts of devotion (bhakti) which are practised in a temple setting. Thus, music can also be examined as an additional convention alongside the visual characteristics of *darshan*, discussed above.

Opportunities to take *darshan* from images of Hindu deities were presented in two scenes from two serials during the observations. These opportunities occurred in a family-based serial, *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* (*What Do We Call This Relationship?* hereafter abbreviated to *YRKKH*); as well in a religious serial, *Siya Ke Ram* (*Sita's Ram*). The scene from the episode of *YRKKH* revolves around the main family, in the serial, celebrating the festival of *Raksha Bandhan* (a festival for brothers and sisters). Naksh (a central character) has not been able to buy his sisters many gifts for the festival as he lent his money to a friend, who has failed to pay him back. Naksh is unsure of what to do, and nervous about telling his sisters the bad news. He seeks advice from the deities housed in the shrine in his home. While the scene in *Siya Ke Ram* takes place in a temple and revolves around three high-ranking characters, King Janak, Queen Suniana, and a sage Parashurama.

Darshan in the family-based serial was presented to viewers through intercutting of shots between the image of the deity and the worshipper, providing several tableaux moments, and aural cues. The scene begins with the camera being positioned between two *murtis* in the shine. In the middle ground Naksh walks into the centre of the frame with his eyes cast down. The next shot is a point of view shot, from Naksh's position, and the camera begins to pan upwards. First to the shot shows a *murti* of Ganesh, then a full-frontal frame of the *murtis* of Radha and Krishna. With the full-frontal shot of the Radha-Krishna *murtis* the camera stops and the audience (from Naksh's point of view) are presented with a tableaux moment from

which they can take *darshan*. The camera movement and framing of the scene replicate the visuals a devotee would see whilst in a temple when they go to take *darshan*, thus representing familiar images to the audience. In order to further emphasise the tableaux moment, the scene is accompanied by music from a *bansuri* flute, the instrument associated with Krishna.

Similar camera positions and point of view shots are used in a scene from *Siya Ke Ram*. It is a continuation from the opening scene of the episode. The first shot on returning to the scene opens with a wide angle shot of the interior of the main prayer room in a temple. This instantly places the viewer in the action of the scene. King Janak, Queen Sunaina, and Parashurama are standing, facing each other in the middle ground. Parashurama has his back to the camera, while the King and Queen are facing the camera, they are all framed by two large ornately decorated marble pillars on either side. As the action unfolds Parashurama turns towards the camera and begins to walk towards it. The next shot is from Parashuram's point of view that is looking directly at a *murti* of Shiva that is on an altar. For the remainder of the scene, similarly to the scene above, a montage of shots that intercut between Parashurama's point of view and viewpoints from the *murti* of Shiva.

Both scenes reiterate the conventions outlined by Babb (1981) and Lutgendorf (1995). As Babb highlighted, these scenes are made up of shots that intercut between viewpoint shots from the deity's perspective, and the point of view shots from the characters perspective. However, it is important to state that, the audience was not presented with point of view shots from the perspective of the *murtis*, when there were opportunities to take *darshan* from images of deities. Each time a shot from the deity's perspective is presented, the viewers were only given a viewpoint shot, never a point of view shot. In other words, the camera is positioned over the shoulder of the murti. In Babb's analysis of the scene from *Jai Santosi Maa* the camera is positioned slightly to the right of the *murti*. Thus, implying that the camera is not directly in the position of the murti. The positioning of the camera in such a way indicates that the audience cannot observe the action of the scene from the deity's point of view because the deity itself has embodied the image. Diana Eck argued that the deity comes to reside in images created for them; therefore, the audience cannot take the deity's point of view because the *murti* is the 'real embodiment of the deity' (Eck, 1985:45). The serials seem to follow this traditional rule when representing images of Hindu deities on the screen. The description of the shots above emphasise how the viewer is never in the position of the image as it is already

occupied. On the one hand, and perhaps on a simplistic level, if the vessel (the *murti*) is occupied it cannot be by something else, hence, why the camera, and thus, the audience is positioned next to the deity not within it.

I argue further that a point of view position of the deity is not given to audiences because they cannot identify with a deity. What I mean by this refers to Zizek's (1989, cited in Prasad, 1999) understanding of symbolic and imaginary identification. The viewer is denied the possibility of imaginary identification with the deities because they are superior figures. As such, viewers can only symbolically identify with, either the person seeking the *darshan* from the deity, or, with any other mediating figures/characters, such as a priest or the director. In other words, the lay person cannot formulate an imaginary form of identification with the deity because there can be no resemblance with the deity, we cannot be like them. Therefore, symbolic identification is the only other form that is acceptable. Thus, the power of the deity remains as one grounded in religious hierarchy.

The use of the *bansari* flute music in the scene from *YRKKH* has two functions. First, it functions in the manner described by Vasudevan (2000), heightening the devotional aspect of the scene. As discussed in Chapter 2, Vasudevan argued that a devotional construction of *darshan* focused on the devotee and their need to seek *darshan*. In the scene Naksh's devotion to the Krishna is shown through the combination of shots, framing and the use of music. The second function, of the music can also be 'a call' to the audience who may not be engaged and not looking at the screen when the deity is presented. On hearing the music, the audience would be familiar with the *bansuri'*s connection to the deity and therefore re-engage, and look at, the television.

Each scene gave the audience full frontal framing of the *murti* and time for the two-way exchange to occur. In other words, the viewers are given tableaux moments to take *darshan*. The full-frontal shot of the murtis, particularly in the case of the scene from *YRKKH* was shown several times, suggesting that the viewer is encouraged and interpellated to take *darshan*. On the one hand, an argument could be made that audiences may not be engaged, and looking at, the screen when the first tableaux moment is presented, and so provide numerous opportunities instead. Sophie Hawkins' (1999) highlighted that context is also very important to experiencing *darshan* from media. Through her examination of *darshan* via websites Hawkins argued that *darshan* for some of her participants 'had less to do with the image per se

more to do with the particular context of seeing- "it depends on what is going on in the room at the time I am viewing as to whether or not it is *darshan* or just sharing, or information" [4]' (Hawkins, 1999:148). In other words, engagement with the opportunities to take *darshan* were dependent on several factors, such as the environment, other people, and other sounds. Similar reasoning can also be applied to the tableaux moments in the serials. The repetition of full-frontal shots of the deity could be an acknowledgement on behalf of the producers that the audiences are not looking or not engaged. However, on the other hand, the implication of the repeated cut to a tableaux moment, can also suggest that the audience has little power to resist, ignore or negotiate these mediated opportunities to take *darshan*. As highlighted in the literature review through the conceptualisation of encoding/decoding by Stuart Hall (1973), the text-based work of Desai (2003) and Gopinath (2000); as well as through the empirical work of Morley (1986), Banaji (2006/2012) and many others. Audiences can, and will, read texts differently according to a variety of factors such as aspects of personhood and experiences. The idea of these texts being read in a negotiated manner is an area I came back to discuss in relation to my participant responses below.

Analysis of the scenes also indicates that the audience is presented with the opportunity for *darshan* through the help or mediation of a character. Babb also highlighted that there is some form of mediation that occurs, whereby the characters in the scene and the director bring the opportunity of taking *darshan* to the viewers, a convention also argued by Prasad (1998). For Prasad *darshan* in a temple setting is a mediated experience for the devotee. The opportunity to take *darshan* from a murti or other image in a shrine is mediated through the priest, who presents the devotee to the deity. Prasad argued that the role of mediation in a filmic setting, or, in the case of this study in the television setting, is taken over by characters and directors. In the two scenes discussed above, it is through the directors and the characters that the audience are presented with the opportunities to take *darshan*. The sequence of the shots analysed above initially shows how the character mediating the opportunity takes *darshan* first but then the camera places the audience in their position, thus, allowing the audience to take *darshan* and follow the characters' actions.

So far, in these scenes *darshan* is presented as part of the devotee's worshipping practices and seen as a religious act. However, there are numerous other power structures that surround the concept of *darshan* that need to be examined. As with other ways of looking there are numerous other power structures that surround, and intersect, within the looking structures

of *darshan*; such as the complex political power relations of gender, caste and class. In this section, I want to examine the deeper nationalist ideologies, and its associated power relations, that surround these constructions of *darshan*. I particularly want to focus on how organisations, and political parties, that are affiliated with (as well as champion) a Hindu nationalist agenda has used the serials to increase the reach of their message. Arvind Rajagopal (2001) details the way the Hindu far right organisations, and political parties, used not only religious iconography in their propaganda, but also how they seized upon the increase of television viewership through the *Ramayan* (1987):

> [R]ecent manifestation of Hindu nationalism (e.g. between 1987 -1993) lay at the intersection of the efforts of Hindu nationalist, to mobilze [sic] and consolidate a Hindu vote, and the increased assertiveness of a variety of new claimants to political power. This occurred in the context of a wider cultural prominence of Hindu religious themes and symbols, due among other things to the expansion of communications and the consequently greater circulation given to religion (23).

However, it was not just religious iconography but *darshan* that was also appropriated with coded messages of the Hindu far right. Christiane Brosius argued that the construction of *darshan* could be used 'as a tool of social discipline and order' (Brosius, 2002:275). In other words, *darshan* can be used by those in power, or those who wish to gain power, as a tool to bring the public into line and thinking the same. For example, a key message embedded in Hindutva media is that of India being a Hindu nation. The images used emphasise India's history to be a Hindu history, specifically a Hinduism grounded in Sanskrit based, north Indian traditions, that favour high caste, Brahmanical practices and hierarchies (Rajagopal, 2004).

An example of the influence of the Hindutva on *darshan* in serials could be seen in the scene from YRKKH, where the character asks the deity Krishna for help. Brosius argued that the Indian Hindu right (Hindutva) use *darshan* and constructs of *darshan* to sway public opinion and build support. Brosius (2002), through her analysis of propaganda videos made by Jain studios - a Hindutva affiliated production house, noted how the studio took advantage of and re-aligned images of the God King Rama to help promote the Hindutva agenda. In the video God Manifests Himself, Brosius highlights that producers had embedded posters and calendar art depicting Rama into the video. The images were intercut with those of Hindutva leaders and events, such as protests around the Babri Masjid. Brosius argues that by intercutting the images together in the video it combined 'the sacred with the non-sacred - creating an

oscillation between the two that become indistinguishable' (Pinney, 1997 in Brosius, 2002:271). On the one hand images of Hindu deities came to represent and give credence as well as gravitas to Hindutva. On the other hand, leaders and organisations of Hindutva come to be seen as sacred, and divine figures themselves. Naksh's decision to turn to Krishna could be read in a way that it is not the deity that the character has turned to but the Hindu right. The deity stands in as a metaphor or representation for government. Therefore, I argue in this scene there is the implied meaning that the deity adds gravitas to political figures, and it is to them the character is turning to for help - not his family or friends. I cannot say for certain if the viewer needs to be embedded in a broader culture where this form blending together of the deities and the government happen all the time. But as suggested by Banaji (2018) in Chapter 2, there is a conscious push by the Hindu right to re-appropriate Hindu iconography and practices. It is unclear how much of the videos produced by Jain Studios and other propaganda media the diaspora had access to or have currently. However, I am aware of various other media texts some, amongst the diaspora (including the participants of this research) do have access to beyond the television channels. For example, popular Bollywood films are regularly released and available to view in multiplexes such as Odeon or Cineworld. Other cultural and media texts the diaspora have access to are, a weekly, UK published Gujarati language newspaper, *Gujarat Samachar UK*, and a magazine *Garvi Gujarat*.[xxviii] There are also independent commercial radio stations available, such as Sunrise Radio.[xxix] Before DAB digital radio the broadcasting frequencies for these stations was limited to certain geographical locations such as Leicester. The internet has increased the accessibility of broader cultural artefacts via sites such as YouTube, Facebook and other sites and applications, but to what extent it is being consumed by the diaspora is unclear.

Iconography within the serials play a vital role in emphasising the influence of the Hindutva agenda. Brosius linked the use of iconography related to *darshan* to Michal Taussig's idea of 'controlled mimesis' (Brosius, 2002:275). The controlled mimesis is used by 'social agents' (Brosius) and re-appropriated for their own ends. In other words, political parties take objects (iconographical items) and practices that are familiar to the public and embed them with new meanings that help promote the party's ideologies. For example, here the Hindu right take images of Hindu deities, and north Indian, Brahmanical Hindu practices and repurpose them in their struggle for the Indian nation to become a Hindu nation.

In the two scenes from *YRKKH* and *Siya Ke Ram* there are some examples of how iconography can be used to perpetuate one particular ideology, that of the Hindu right. For example, marigolds are used in both scenes to decorate the sets. In the first scene the set is dressed with marigold garlands and the small murti of Ganesh is garlanded with the same flowers; while in the second scene the alter on which the bow sits is covered with a bed of marigolds and more flowers are strewn over the pedestal on which the murti of Shiva is placed. I argue that the marigolds have been placed in the scenes largely for their colour. In other words, it is not the flower that is significant it is the colour of the flower, saffron, that is important here. Colours such as orange, yellow and red (and their varying hues) have had long associations with many practices of Hinduism (Jha. 2014). Sadan Jha (2014) highlighted how Sanskrit scriptures describe and prescribe colours to specific deities and sections of society on a caste basis. Jha (2014) described how saffron became a politicised colour in the early half of the twentieth century, when members of the Indian National Congress Party began discussing the formation of a new flag. Saffron was a colour associated with sacrifice and renunciation; many sadhus and renouncers wear saffron coloured robes. In recent years the marigold flower has been re-appropriated to represent the sacrifice of the Indian Armed Forces, similar to how the poppy flower is used in the U.K. (Peri, 2018). Through its associations with Vedic Hinduism and sacrifice the colour has been adopted by the political wing of the Hindu-right, the BJP.

There are also other elements of iconography in the two scenes that emphasise a north Indian, Sanskrit based Hinduism to the viewers. One element, particularly from the scene in *YRKKH* is costume. Naksh is dressed in a traditional kurta. This contrasts with the scenes seen previously in the episode where he had been wearing western clothes such as jeans and a t-shirt. Shoma Munshi observes that 'men's sartorial styles range from Indian clothing of knee-length formal coats like sherwanis and kurtas for most scene of religious festivals and other ceremonies such as marriages, etc. and western clothes - suits, shirts and ties - as well' (Munshi, 2010:92). This convention, of changing into traditional clothing was also observed amongst female characters as well, namely in *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, Sandhya the main protagonist, would wear traditional clothes such as a sari or a salwar kurta or a churidar when not in uniform. Further to this I also observed most of the characters, particularly the female characters, wore traditional clothing throughout the episodes and serials overall.

The costumes also represented the wealth and class status of the families in the serials. Munshi (2010) adds a further strand that was on display through the costumes, as she

highlighted that it was not only the wealth of the family that was represented on screen but also how much expense the studios placed upon the clothing. '[A]lmost all of them [serials] have stories of rich industrialist joint families, all the actors wear expensive, designer clothes. The women are mostly decked out in the latest fashionable saris with matching jewelry [sic] and accessories' (Munshi, 2010:92). Thus, the expense placed on costume by producers is highlighted by Munshi through her field work where '[p]roducers have told me that one sari can cost up to INR 50,000. And clothes are almost never worn more than once. The fashions worn by soap actors have spawned an entire industry of neighborhood [sic] copycat tailors in big cities and small towns' (Munshi, 2014:71). I argue that Naksh's costume during the scene is an example of the expense studios place on this aspect of production, but it also fits into the position of his family being entrepreneurial middle urban class. I should also state that in the episodes watched during the observations there were a number of scenes that depicted informal, everyday situations with the families. During these scenes, even though the women still wore traditional Indian clothes they were not as extravagant. The clothes were either a plain or lightly printed salwar kurtas or saris with simple jewellery, while reserving the more heavily embroidered costumes for more special occasions and (mostly religious) celebrations.

Another aspect of the mise-en-scene that emphasises a north Indian, middle class Hindu image of India can be seen through the sets which also seem to represent the wealth of families in the serials. Munshi (citing Patricia Uberoi (2006), 2010:176) argued that the sets of serials combine 'a haute bourgeois lifestyle seamlessly with religiosity and with traditionalism in rituals'. Munshi highlighted that the serial 'foreground discourses of consumerism in a globalizing India, while at the same time threading together discourses of a normative Hindu identity' (Munshi, 2010:176). In other words, in popular Hindi language films and in TV programmes like the serials there is blend of consumerism and Hindu traditionalism. The homes of the families are large lavishly decorated mansions. Again, in the scene from *YRKKH*, it is set on a mezzanine floor of the family home. The audience understand from the previous scene that this mezzanine overlooks the main living space of the family home. From the mezzanine floor the audience can see the opulence not only of the mansion itself but how it has been decorated for the festivities. In the middle-ground there is a white marble balcony running left to right along the mezzanine. Over the central living space, still in the middle ground there is a large chandelier hanging from a ceiling. The use of expensive building materials like marble, and large glass chandeliers all lead to an understanding that the family is wealthy. This style of home could also be seen in an array of family-based serials such as *Diya*

Aur Baati Hum, *Swaragini* and *Sasural Simar Ka*. These serials all centred around wealthy, business owning families living within large extended family units. It is unclear if there is direct connection, as there is no acknowledgement from Munshi (2010) with this regard, but some similarities can be drawn with the display of wealth in contemporary prime time Hindi serials with American prime-time soap operas such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*.[xxx] The set design for the living spaces also mimicked the interiors of temples which I examine in more detail below in relation to a different scene from *YRKKH*.

Similarly, the temple, in which the scene from *Siya Ke Ram* is set, is also ornately decorated. It is made up of large polished stone or marble pillars, with extravagant gold detailing around the bottom. Added to this there are numerous gold coloured oil lamp holders placed all around the *murti*, as well as near to the entrance of the prayer room. Above, what look like windows or openings in the wall, there seems to be brightly coloured and intricately painted tiles running the length of the wall. The windows or openings themselves have carved wooden frames and the remainder of walls in the room are wooden screens. There is an opulence to the set that denotes this is the temple of a wealthy family. The grand and opulent nature of the sets seem to suggest to the viewers that it is acceptable for them to be consumers of commodities, as long as, traditions from some forms of Hinduism (specifically a North Indian Sanskrit background) are observed. This blending together of consumerism and tradition is epitomised, for Munshi, in the way the sets are decorated for the celebration of religious festivals such as *Raksha Bandan*, and similarly to the sets I have described above. Munshi argues that these kinds of sets are 'pleasurable to see [and]… contribute to a sense of "Indian-ness" (Munshi, 2010:176-177). Munshi does not give a clear definition of "Indian-ness" but recognises that just like 'Bollywood films of the 1990s, soaps also conflate an "Indian Identity" with a Hindu identity' (Munshi, 2010:179). But I argue that this "Indian-ness" or to be more specific this Hindu-ness, can also be found in the sets when they are not decorated for special occasions. Above I highlight how the homes mimicked temple structures, which remain throughout the serial, thus constantly signalling to the viewer of its 'Hindu-ness'.

Another element in which the scene from *YRKKH* further emphasises the Hindutva agenda through the construction *darshan*, is with the representation of the festival *Raksha Bandan*. Traditionally, it has been a north Indian festival, celebrating the relationship between brothers and sisters. Sisters tie a decorative piece of cotton on their brother's wrist, which symbolises a sisters' protection. Brothers are also presented, and fed, sweet treats. In return, the brother

offers gifts, as gratitude, for the protection. However, Christophe Jaffrelot (1999) highlights that the Hindu right have re-interpreted festivals, like *Raksha Bandan*, to represent the brotherhood, and brotherly bond, between members of organisations such as the RSS. Seethi and Joshy state that 'the RSS has been celebrating these festivals on a nationalist level. The basic thread that is going through these celebrations is the notion of 'Hindu Rashtra,' it's unity and pride beyond the sectarian divisions. Till 20 years back, festivals like *'Raksha Bandan*' were unknown to South Indians. Through *shakra's* intense campaign, now they have become popular in southern India' (Seethi & Joshy, 2015:111). Munshi (2010) too observes the way serials have made largely north Indian regional celebrations, such as *Kaurva Chauth*, *Vat Savitri* and *Janmashtami*, popular across, not only, regions and states but also across India as a whole. The celebrations of the festivals in the serials further highlights observations made by Shakuntala Banaji in her analysis of the film *Raja Hindustani*. Banaji argues that 'families presented as a more 'traditionally Indian' might be depicted celebrating the birth of a child, a '*sagai*' (engagement) or another religious festival' (Banaji, 2002:4), examples of which I discuss below. If we consider the celebration of *Raksha Bandan* alongside the traditional costumes worn by characters, the set design as well as the use of the colour saffron in the scenes it can lead to an understanding that the family from *YRKKH* represents an ideal Indian family unit that is middle class, wealthy, family orientated and following traditional North Indian Hindu traditions and values. Overall, this highlights how the serials, with an underlying Hindutva agenda, are gradually homogenising Hinduism all over India.

The analysis and discussions above have focused on how viewers are presented with opportunities to take *darshan* from images of Hindu deities. I highlighted the similar visual, and aural, cues that are used to present these opportunities to the viewer. I also discussed several strategies, used by the producers, that allowed viewers the opportunities to take *darshan*. Strategies such as placing the viewer in the action of the scene and mediating the opportunities through characters in the serials. It was also highlighted that viewers are presented with viewpoint shots from a deity's perspective as opposed to a point-of-view shot, thus emphasising the idea that the deity is present in images. The analysis, also examined broader contexts in which to consider *darshan* in the serials, namely as a strategy by the Hindu right to perpetuate an ideal image of an Indian who is a Hindu. More specifically, this is a Hindu following north India traditions, accepting of the hierarchical caste roles, and are from wealthy middle-class backgrounds. These ideas were perpetuated through the mise-en-scène but also through the depiction of the family celebrating a predominately north Indian festival.

The next section now turns to examining opportunities to take *darshan* from actors who play the role of Hindu deities and to continue the examination of *darshan*'s re-appropriated use.

4.3 *Darshan* from Actors in the role of Deities

The discussion above focused on two scenes where *darshan* can be taken from images, *murtis* of deities. Here I discuss opportunities for *darshan* in relation to an actor playing the role of a deity. Babb's (1981) analysis did not only refer to moments when the camera turns to the image (*murti*) of the Goddess Santoshi, but also to an actor playing the role of the deity. However, unlike in the previous scene where the goddess was happy, in this scene the deity is angered. Babb describes how the camera bypasses the image of the Goddess, and cuts straight to the actor playing the role of the Goddess in heaven. In this scene, Babb (1981) suggested that the viewer is not placed in the action, but takes on an omni-present view, as a montage between the action unfolding in the home of the main protagonist and in heaven is presented. A similar scene was also depicted in the contemporary television serial *Santoshi Maa*. I watched with Participant 3 during our observations. In the scene the viewers are given an omni-present point of view of all the action taking place both on earth with the main protagonist and with the deities in their celestial home. However, it is difficult to say how these scenes were constructed as I was unable to access them for detailed analysis. But the opening credits of the serial provide insight into how opportunities are given. For example, the title card for *Santoshi Maa* shows an image of an actor (Gracy Singh) in her role as the goddess Santoshi. She wears a tall golden crown that has a halo-like ring of bright white light coming from behind her head, indicating her divinity. The image depicts the Goddess with her *mudras* (multiple arms and hands) showing, in three of which she carries a sword, a trident and a bowl of rice/milk. The fourth hand (right side) is held up with the palm facing forward – a sign that the deity is giving her blessing. This blessing is made visible through a beam of light shining out from the deity's open palm. This visible blessing can be interpreted in two ways, on the one hand it represents the deity giving the viewer blessings but on the other it represents the deity giving blessing to the main character of the serial who is standing to the left of the title card with her hands together in prayer. The Goddess herself is framed by ornate arches that continue into the background, on either side of the deity there are three bells thus replicating a temple setting. The colour palette is also dominated by a saffron hue particularly in the middle ground surrounding the deity thus re-emphasising the north Indian Hindu traditions.

The title card could be examined further in relation to frontality in Parsi theatre as discussed in Chapter 2, where I referred to Anuradha Kapur's (1993) description of frontality in Parsi Theatre. Kapur stated that if an actor faces outward in this frontal position it is a sign, in theatre, that the audience can and should engage with the actor. With this title card I suggest that as both actors are in a frontal position, the viewers are to engage with and seek *darshan* from both actors. I came to this understanding through the roles played by the two actors within the diegesis of the serial. Through the title card there is the implication that the main protagonist of Santoshi (Ratan Rajput) acts 'as a *patra* – a vessel' (Geeta Kapur, 1987) for the goddess Santoshi. Ratan Rajput's character embodies the qualities and emotion of the deity (in this case Gracy Singh's Goddess Santoshi).

This analysis highlights that there is the same political ideological undercurrent to opportunities of *darshan* as there are in the cases of when *darshan* is taken via a murti. These opportunities focused on representations of Hindu deities either by using images such as *murtis* or actors in the role of a deity. The section begins to argue that the Hindu right are using the concept of *darshan* to enforce a specific social order and ideology that India is a Hindu nation; not only this but the Hinduism that is followed by these Indians is a north Indian version of the religion that maintains caste-based hierarchies and is grounded in the Sanskrit texts that are largely only understood by the high caste Brahmins. I want to now turn my attention to the construction of *darshan* towards non-religious yet still superior figures.

4.4 *Darshan* and Non-religious figures.

This section again examines scenes from *Siya Ke Ram* and *YRKKH*, as well as, a third serial *Swaragini*. In the scene from *Siya Ke Ram* the object of *darshan* is the King, Janak, while in the remaining two serials the object of *darshan* are the male protagonists.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed the power relation within the darshanic mode of looking. The power lies with the object of the look rather than the person doing the looking. Prasad (1998:76) stated that 'in the *darsanic* [sic] relation the object gives itself to be seen and in so doing confers a privilege upon the spectator. The object of the *darsanic* gaze is a superior, a divine figure or king who presents himself as a spectacle of dazzling splendour to his subjects, the *praja* or people'. In other words, through the structure of *darshan* any superior figure who wants to be seen by those inferior to them can give themselves up to be seen. These superior figures can vary from a God, as seen in the discussions above, or to a king, prince or husband.

An example of a superior figure presenting themselves as a spectacle occurred in another episode of *Siya ke Ram*. King Janak, father of Sita, hosts a *swayamvara* and it is his arrival at this event that is presented as 'dazzling splendour'.[xxxi] The scene is set in a large arena which is established through two wide shots, one from the entrance of the arena looking towards the throne and a reverse shot from the throne looking towards the entrance. The arena is decorated with flowers, again mostly marigolds, as well as fabric banners from the ceiling, elaborate metal oil lamp holders and carved and painted wood. In the centre of the arena there is a two-tier square platform that has been draped with garlands of marigolds. On the four corners of the lower tier stand metal oil lamp holders. On either side wall, running from the entrance to the throne, there are two raised platforms with a row of elaborate throne like chairs. Behind this row but raised slightly higher are another set of throne like chairs. Seated on these chairs are men in fine looking, brightly coloured robes and tall gold crowns, surrounded by their entourages. Above these rows of chairs are three to four tiers of stands that look to be occupied by townspeople. Further banners, this time saffron in colour, are placed in amongst the stands. The scene is accompanied by a fanfare and a constant drumbeat. From the wide establishing shots, the next images are close ups of the musicians in the scene, namely a drummer but later a row of holy men blowing on conch shells thus signalling the arrival of an important person. This is quickly followed by a long shot of the entrance, as King Janak arrives with his entourage. As the King makes his way to the far end of the arena the music intensifies, and the scene is intercut with long shots from different positions around the arena. All are focused on the King as he walks the full length of the arena. It is only when the King has reached his throne, under a covered gazebo, that he turns to the crowd and acknowledges them, thus in turn allowing the people to see him and take his *darshan*. The audience is also given this opportunity, as the camera, again in a long shot, is positioned on the floor of the arena directly opposite the king. This framing and positioning of the characters mimic the construction of *darshan* found in a temple setting. The gazebo acts like a shrine for the King. In a previous shot the audience would have noted the oil lamp holders placed in front but to either side of the gazebo as well, again replicating a temple scene.

In this scene many of the conventions discussed in Section 4.2 are also present here. For example, there is a full-frontal shot of the king presented in a tableaux moment at the end of the scene. Anotherr convention that is also present it's the intercutting of shots. Above I

describe how viewpoint shots from the King's perspective and point of view shots from the crowd's standpoint are edited together. Mediation is also present in the scene, however, unlike the previous scenes it does not follow one character, instead it is the director who acts as the mediator and presents the king to the viewer. Finally, music also plays a key role in the scene. The scene is another example of Vasudevan's (2000) devotional form of *darshan*. Although the audience are given a full-frontal shot of the King, it is at some distance. The music, specifically the sound of the conch shells, also plays a key role in setting the scene as a darshanic experience. The use of the conch shells when the King arrives is a reminder of *darshan* in a temple setting. I have often heard conch shells accompany the revealing of deities in shrine during key festivals like *Janmashtami*.

The scene also has the underlying connotations of the Hindutva agenda. This is represented by the colour saffron on the banners. Not only this but there is the reinforcement of the arguments from earlier in the chapter, around who the viewer identifies with in the darshanic relationship. This is another example of how audiences are led to identify with the townspeople and other on lookers in the scene, thus, as Prasad (1998, citing Zizek 1989) argued through symbolic identification. What I am saying, is that in this scene the audience cannot identify with the object of *darshan* (King Janak) in a way that may allow them to think 'that is me or I am like this character'. Instead the audience identify with those who seeking and taking *darshan*, which are the ones without power in this relationship. The identification of the audience with the inferior and the spectacular presentation of the superior is an example of what Prasad (1998) argued as being strategies used by the ruling classes, and I add also by those who wish to promote a specific ideology (Hindutva) to legitimise power and therefore their standing in society and the hierarchy of caste. In Chapter 3, I discussed Barthes (1973) assertation that myths can gain traction amongst readers if the signification is repeatedly used. In terms of myth making the saffron colour becomes the sign (or in Barthes terms the form). This sign of saffron has been filled by the producers of the serials and the Indian government to mean (represent) Hindus and the Hindutva nationalist agenda. In Barthes terminology this is the signification. What is important to remember, is that for the dominate signification (understanding) to be received by everyone, both the producers and the viewers need to have the same cultural background/contexts. Even though the participants of this research share some of the cultural background and contexts, there are many that they do not share with the producers. Mainly the participants do not live in India, under a Hindutva led government and so this reading could be overlooked or not understood by them.

The scenes discussed above highlight that the viewer is placed in the position of the male characters or within a crowd, who are seeking and taking *darshan*. In the next part of this section I shall examine how women and female characters are positioned as inferior to their husband and ex-boyfriends, thus legitimising patriarchal hierarchies and placing male characters at object of *darshan*.

Moving beyond religious serials there were further constructions of *darshan* in the family-based serials. These opportunities were largely from the perspective of female characters, Akshara from *YRKKH* and Swara from *Swaragini* who looked towards their husband/ex-boyfriend through darshanic construction. Therefore, the concept of *darshan* moves away from the religious frame into one focused more on love and potentially devotion. Hanna Klien argued 'it is very common that *darshan* is transferred from a religious context to the context of a love story, where it is used to frame desire mostly in song and dance sequences' (Taylor 2002 in Klien, 2013:65). Although, Klien examined popular Hindi language films, this change in context is also found the serials, though perhaps not necessarily within a song and dance sequence, however in the two scenes discussed below music and song do play key roles in constructing *darshan*. Taking Taylor's (2002) ideas further, Klien highlights that alongside the codes for *darshan*, the song and dance sequences in films also had to 'reinforce other visual codes primarily those of the romantic genre. Close-ups and frontal shots highlight the lover's gaze representing desire and the erotic, but also activate the notion of *darshan* as they resemble the iconic images of the deity' (Klien, 2013:65).

The scene from *Swaragini* takes place after Sanskaar has just become engaged to his long lost, but now returned girlfriend, Kavita. The *sagai* (engagement) was attended by Swara and her family because her half-sister Ragini is married to Sanskaar's cousin. Upset and unable to watch, Swara leaves part way through the ceremony. Through a series of long shots, the audience is shown Swara return home, run into her dark bedroom, and collapse onto the bed. The room is largely lit by flashes of lightning, but between the flashes, the audience can still make out the main features of the room and the action occurring within the scene. Gradually the camera moves close into the scene and the audience sees a rolled-up piece of paper land on Swara's bed, tapping her. As Swara reads the message, the shots presented intercut between Swara's point of view and head on mid-shots. This sequence of intercutting shots ends with a point of view shot, enabling the audience to read the note. The next shot is a wide

angle shot showing Swara getting up and moving towards the window. As she reaches the window, the audience is presented with a straight-on mid-shot looking into the room. Swara pulls back the curtain and hold out her hand as she calls out for Sanskaar. The following shot is from Swara's point of view, and the audience is presented with a full length, head on shot of Sanskaar being framed by the curtains. What follows is a montage between full frontal shots of Swara and Sanskaar. With each cut back to Sanskaar the camera moves in closer, from the full-length frame to the head on mid-shot. Throughout these cuts Swara remain at the same distance, in a mid-shot. With the last intercut to Sanskaar the scene climaxes and Sanskaar reaches out his hand, it is at this moment that Sanskaar acknowledges Swara's look of *darshan* towards him. Sanskaar now reaches out to Swara, mimicking her action from earlier in the scene.

Like the scenes discussed earlier in the chapter (section 4.2) this scene again follows many of the conventions highlighted by Babb (1981) and others. There is a tableaux moment and full-frontal framing, which occurs towards the climax of the scene. Prior to these shots are also intercut between Swara and Sanskaar to build up to the point where Sanskaar, as the object of *darshan*, reciprocates Swara's look. The opportunity was also mediated by through Swara's actions in the scene. It was through her seeking an exchange of looks with Sanskaar that then leads the viewer to partake in the exchange as well.

To add to the darshanic construction the setting of the scene also has reminders and connotations of a temple. The most obvious reminder is the use of curtains and the window that is used to frame Sanskaar. This mimic the image of a Hindu deity in a shrine, where is curtain is often found at the opening. Full frontal shots of Sanskaar were also presented to the audience, and the moment Sanskaar acknowledges Swara suggests this is the tableaux moment in the scene. The object of *darshan* has given the looker the exchange of looks they were seeking.

There is also a mix of romantic genre codes, although not a song and dance sequence, music plays a key role in this construction of *darshan*. From the moment Swara receives the note an ostinato begins to play repeatedly. This ostinato sounds like a piece of music that is found in an action film; it uses a range of string instruments and loud crashing drums and cymbals. This music continues over the intercutting shots of the two characters until Sanskaar acknowledges Swara's look and reaches out to her. At this moment, the music changes to a much softer

sounding instrumental performed by, what sounds like, a traditional Indian wind instrument like a *shehnai* or a *sundari*. Ravi Vasudevan (2000) and Woodman Taylor (2002) both highlight, that in films such as *Pyassa* (1957) and *Guddi* (1971), scenes such as the one described above used *bhajans* (devotional hymns) to help punctuate the desire of the female character (in the inferior position) for the male character (in the superior position). However, both pieces of music that accompany this scene do not have a religious connotation, though the softer musical soundtrack does sound like music that is much more suited to a romantic scene, thus the observance of codes from the romantic genre which are also evident in the scene from *YRKKH*.

The scene from *YRKKH* has similarities to the scene from Swaragini but the key differences are that there are no conventions mimicking a temple setting and there is a brief sequence of singing by the female character in the scene. The scene takes place just before the family are set to celebrate *Teej puja*. Akshara wants to apologise to Naitik (her husband) and Naksh (son), who are upset with her due to an earlier misunderstanding. The scene begins with a wide establishing shot of the open plan central living space of the family mansion. The extended family, mainly the women and children are stood and sat around the set. Through this wide long shot, Naitik enters the space from off screen - right and walks towards Akshara and other female family members standing in the middle ground. As Naitik approaches, Akshara comes to meet him in the middle of the room/set. She then begins to sing *Dil Se Bandi Ek Dor* (*A String Ties our Hearts*) (this song is the couple's signature soundtrack), the instrumental opening for the song accompanied the long shot of Naitik entering the room. A montage of edits follow that intercut a series of mid-shots of the two characters with over shoulder shots of Naitik from Akshara's viewpoint. As Akshara sings, she is holding her ears as a sign to signalling she is sorry (the holding of ears is a common and playful gesture to indicate someone is sorry).

Initially, in this sequence of shots Naitik ignores Akshara's approach and turns his back to her. Realising the apology is not being accepted, Akshara begins to turn, and walk away disappointed. The next shot is a mid-shot of characters in which Naitik realises Akshara is walking away. He then grabs her hand, and, as she turns to face him, the next shot positions the audience over the shoulder of Naitik from Akshara's viewpoint, and the two characters exchange looks. The following shot is a frontal head and shoulder shot of Naitik on his own.

The construction of *darshan* in this scene may not be as obvious as the previous scenes but many of its conventions are still present. For example, it is Naitik, as the object of *darshan*, who decides when Akshara's look will be reciprocated. The camera presents the audience with shots and viewpoints from Akshara's perspective thus allowing the audience to identify with the character seeking *darshan*. Akshara and the audience are also presented with a frontal shot like the scenes above, here, the audience are again placed in a position of inferiority. The viewpoint camera angles constantly place the audience in the position of Akshara as she seeks forgiveness and so *darshan* from Naitik – the superior figure. With Naitik as the object of Akshara's *darshan*, it places him and thus the male gender in a superior position. The superiority of Naitik's character is further emphasised through the infantilization of Akshara as she holds her ears. Although, at initial glance the gesture maybe understood to be playful, there is also the implication of the inferior position as well.

As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, a Hindutva agenda is emphasised through the representation of celebrations and festivals, mostly observed in North Indian Sanskrit form of Hinduism. Both scenes are centred on the families celebrating traditional festivals and occasions, in *YRKKH* the family are celebrating *Teej Puja* and in *Swaragini* it is the celebration of an engagement. Again, in both scenes, other members of the family, who do not live in the main house, arrive to celebrate the festivities, something that also occurred in the previous scene around *Raksha Bandan*. This is an indication of what Munshi refers to as the centrality of *parivaar* (family) and *parampara* (tradition) (Munshi, 2014:63) and further emphasises Banaji's point made earlier in the chapter, that Indian families are represented celebrating religious festivals and occasions. It seems that Munshi is mostly referring to the traditional sense of family of mother, father, children, grandparents, husbands, wives, aunts and uncles. But I argue there is a broader understanding to be garnered from this idea of family. The serials seem to suggest that family is not simply blood relatives but also through organisations such as the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamseval Sangh (National Volunteer Organisation)*). By belonging to the s*hakhas* of the RSS, members considered brothers, thus framing the organisation as a surrogate family. More broadly the RSS and other Hindu nationalist organisations, such as the BJP are commonly referred to as a family of organisations called *Sangh Parivar*.

The scenes can also be read as representing specific Hindutva ideas of gender. Mankekar (1999) argued that men and women in the 1987 *Ramayan* serial were prescribed in an essentialist manner. Men were to be physical and warrior like (Bhatt and Mukta (2000) likened

this to the revocation of the *Kshatriaya* caste); the representation of women, focused on their roles as mothers and wives. In Chapter 2, I mentioned Fazal (2009), who further argued that female characters in serials are now depicted as traditional housewives who uphold many cultural (north Indian Hindu) values. These include forsaking their own happiness for husbands, sons or fathers. Mankekar (1999) uses the example of Kausalya and Sita as examples of women who have given up either their love or honour for the sake of male characters.[xxxii] For me Swara's decision to end her relationship with Sanskaar once his ex-girlfriend re-enters the scene is an example of upholding these values. Swara is sacrificing her happiness for the sake of the male protagonist as well as extended family relations. The depiction of the celebration of *teej puja* reiterates this dominance of the patriarchal underpinning of the kind of Hinduism the nationalist right represents. During the festival married women fast for the health and well-being of their husbands.

Women are commonly represented as passive, innocent, chaste and honour bound. However, Fazal (2009:49) argued that in a liberalised and globalised transnational market 'women are expected to be modern, continue to unify the family, and preserve the cultural heritage whilst the globalisation process re-positions India's ranking in the global market place'. As the embodiment of honour and chastity women need to be protected, even more so in the globalised world. The containment and protection for women often invoked through the use of *Lakshman-rekha* (Mankekar, 1999).[xxxiii] The boundary is represented in contemporary serials either literally or metaphorically, as a reason to contain women, emotionally and physically. I argue that the infantilising depiction of Akshara holding her ears as an apology is an example of Akshara realising she has overstepped the line and wanting to come back under the protection of her husband. Women are portrayed in a childlike - infantilized way to show that they need protecting by Indian men. Ella Shohat (in Shohat and Stam 1994 in Sharad Rajagopal 2010) pointed out how many mainstream Hollywood films represented Asian (Indian) women as helpless against Indian men, who were represented as evil-doers. In Shohat's analysis it would have been a white American or European hero would rescue the women. Now, I argue that producers of Hindi language serials have appropriated this convention to place Indian Hindu men the heroes who rescue the women and characterise any male who is not Hindu, high caste, urban as the 'other' and needs to be feared.

The representations of women discussed above, seem to replicate the traditional associations many of first-generation Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women relate to, as

discussed in Chapter 1. Rayaprol, (1997) referred to the traditional associations as relating more with home, family, and the gendered roles, placed upon them through patriarchal structures. However, Rayaprol (1997) observed a disconnect between women's everyday practices and the traditional roles they associated with. In other words, even though her participants recognised patriarchal structures within the home, their actions implied the marriages were more equal and negotiated. In Chapter 1, I also noted that this disconnect between actions and associations amongst the Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women of my acquaintance. The fact that the women, watched these serials during the observations, suggests that a complex negotiation is taking place. The participants may challenge patriarchal structures and norms in their everyday lives, but this does not mean that they cannot, do not, partake in the patriarchal imaginaries in the serials, an idea I examine in more detail in relation to pleasure and liked characters in Chapter 5.

This section has discussed and analysed the placing of male characters in family-based serials in the position of the object of *darshan*. In both scenes that were analysed the male characters were from urban, wealthy, middle class families. Women were placed in the positions of the 'devotee' who were seeking *darshan* from these male characters. The section above and the sections earlier in the chapter were focused on the visual and aural construction of the serials. The next section moves towards examining responses from the participants and their understanding of *darshan* and television.

4.5 Participants and *Darshan*

In the chapter, so far, I have established various constructions of *darshan* offered in the serials, and highlighted, how the underlying subtexts of the visuals within the serials can be read through a politically charged lens. There is an aspect that the serials are attempting to interpellate the audience into believing the ideology of the Hindu right. In Chapter 2 I explained Althussar's concept of interpellation to refer to the idea, that for an audience, to recognise the ideology that is embedded within it. there needs to be something within the text the audience recognise (Sturcken and Cartwirght, 2017). In the case of the serials, it is the opportunities to take *darshan*. The audience identify with this aspect of themselves and can either acknowledge and agree with the ideology that is embedded within the text or ignore it. The audience can recognise it, acknowledge it is there but can ignore and/or disagree with it. The audience can resist the interpellation presented to them in the text.

Even though the serials presented viewers with opportunities to take *darshan*, it does not necessarily equate to audiences acknowledging them. Indeed, during the participant observations, I did not see any visual cue or physical acknowledgement that the participants had partaken in *darshan* when the opportunities were presented. In section 4.2 I discussed Hawkins' conclusions, in that it was very much dependent on contexts and environment whether *darshan* is taken. There is the implication in what Hawkins' participants state that there they have an idea or a prescribed notion of what *darshan* is. Therefore, through the interviews, I wanted to understand what the participants of this research consider of *darshan* to be and if it can be taken from a television screen.

4.5.1 Participants' understanding of *darshan*

When asked 'what is *darshan*?', all the participants responded in the same way, first and foremost describing *darshan* to be a religious act. Both Sophie Hawkins (1999) and Raminder Kaur (2005) have argued that *darshan* is understood through various intersection factors. Hawkins (1999:148) argued that '[d]arshan itself is defined by devotees according to individual associative contexts, signifying a multiplicity of viewpoints - both embodied and metaphysical, both pragmatic and ritualistic, both representative and epiphanal'. In other words, *darshan* can be read, and understood, in lots of different ways. It is very much dependent on the singular person and their individual associations with *darshan*. For some it could be something they feel physically; while for others it might be something more abstract. For some *darshan* could be a practice as part of their form of Hinduism. Essentially, Hawkins outlines that *darshan* is experienced is many ways; and there is no right or wrong way of understanding what *darshan* is for someone. In Chapter 2, I discussed Kaur's notion of reflexive *darshan* to be a form of believing in God that was flexible and dependent on the individual. Kaur (2005) argued that the individual could decide for themselves, which parts, or, aspects of the religion they wanted to believe in and which parts they did not. Reflexive *darshan* contradicted earlier understandings (Babb, 1981 and Eck, 1985) of *darshan*, that asserted there was no criticality or individual picking and choosing of what to believe. The participants explanations, and descriptions, of *darshan* highlight this individual and partial critical understanding of *darshan*. First, Participants 1, 2, 4 and 5 describe *darshan* in the following way: (square brackets indicate translated from Gujarati)

> Participant 1 – *Darshan* …so if we go to temple we do *darshan. Darshan* means errm… we're meeting… it's meeting and meeting God…. That looking at the God that is

> *darshan*… Getting his blessing is *darshan*.
>
> Participant 2 – [*Darshan* is… we take *darshan* from God with two hands joined together.]
>
> Participant 4 - We do *Darshan* to God.
>
> Participant 5 - [When we give a salutation to *bhagwan* (God)… like [*darshan* for us is we go to mandir to do *darshan* to God. In that] like [it can also be that we are going to meet God]

The quotes reiterate, both Hawkins' (1999) and Kaur's (2005) conceptualisation of *darshan* being understood through a personal lens. The repetitive use of the word *bhagwan* or God, which plays a vital role in the participants understanding of *darshan*, thus emphasising the religious connection or understanding the participants have of the concept. Participant 2 also highlights in her response that there can be a visible, observable gesture when a devotee takes *darshan*; an action of some description, I did not observe during fieldwork. This response from Participant 2 also reinforces Hawkins (1999) assertation that for some *darshan* can be physical.

The participants also agreed that everyone could take *darshan* no matter who they are. Participant 2, however, went a little further to emphasise "[whoever believes] I think [believes in God]" could take *darshan*. Responses to the questions 'who can give *darshan*?' and 'where can one receive *darshan*?' were varied and different. Their initial response to who can give *darshan* was initially "from God", reiterating the concept that taking *darshan* is a religious act. To further emphasise the connection of *darshan* to religion, the participants also considered that *darshan* can also be given by gurus and sages.

However, after some consideration, both Participants 4 and 5 describe another understanding of *darshan* that is linked to the concept of *atihi devo bhava*, the idea that a guest is akin to god. For example, Participant 4 describes how *darshan* could be taken from guests in our homes – whomever they may be. While Participant 5 mentions that sometimes it can be said as a joke to someone we have not seen for a long time.

> Participant 5 - Well sometimes [If we go to town and we meet someone after a long time we would say 'oh it's been a long time since I've taken your *darshan*', and things like that can be… two meanings are created right?]

Christopher Fuller (2004:3) describes how 'Hindus greet and show respect to their many deities, both gods and goddesses, by a simple and perfectly graceful gesture: they raise their hands, with the palms pressed together and fingers pointed upward, and slightly bow the head'. He continues to describe how Hindus use this gesture to greet each other. In his description, Fuller differentiates the extent to which a person may gesture depending on who it is they are greeting. Fuller (2004:3) states, '[i]f the two people are of markedly different status, then only the inferior is likely to perform the gesture and may even fall down in prostration at the superior's feet'. The description reiterates the darshanic relationship. However, Fuller does not state how a person maybe superior. Fuller seems to imply that if the two people are of equal status then the gesture could be used as a greeting throughout the day 'as people run into their relative or friends…. The formal gesture is typically simplified to no more than a rapid lifting of the right hand and a nod of the head' (Fuller, 2004:3). Through this understanding Fuller highlights how in some formations of Hinduism there is 'no absolute distinction between divine and human beings'. However, what I argue is that for the participants of this research there is a hierarchy whereby the divine or the *darshan* from a God/deity is superior to that of a person. This is highlighted by Participant 5 who kept repeating and emphasising that for her, the concept of *darshan* first and foremost relates to God.

Further responses from Participants 3 and 6 reinforce Hawkins' argument of the multiple ways in which *darshan* is understood and Kaur's understanding of reflexive *darshan*. Participant 3 further helps to contextualise the hierarchal nature of *darshan*, through her understanding:

> Participant 3 - … *darshan* from God comes first. {interviewer: that comes first} Yeah that comes first. Gurus give *darshan* but with their *darshan*… see at the moment… today you don't have the same kinds of gurus, brahmins and sants like you used.

For Participant 3, there seems to be, an indication that she believes that the sages and gurus of today can give *darshan* but they do not hold the gravitas of sages and gurus of yesteryear or like the gurus and sages mentioned in Hindu mythology like the Ramayana or the Mahabharata; and so the blessings received by them through *darshan* is lesser than those received from an image of God. This response indicates that the participant does not believe that modern day gurus are as holy or possibly worthy of worship compared to the gurus and sages in the mythologies. There is also the suggestion that perhaps the sages and gurus of the mythologies have cosmic and divine power themselves; as if to suggest the sages and gurus

were themselves minor deities, as opposed to the gurus and sages of today who are largely wise and learned men. This is an example of the selective nature of *darshan* as argued by Kaur. This participant has chosen not to 'believe' in modern day sages and prefers to 'believe' in those mentioned in various texts such as the *Puranas* and the *Bhagawad Gita*.

Participant 6's understanding of *darshan* is quite philosophical and abstract compared to the other participants.

> Participant 6 – [… when we got to in the temple then God's… we do *darshan*... we see face to face that's *Pratyaksa*.]

Participant 6 here is describing the instantaneous (*Pratyksa*) reciprocal looking that occurs when a devotee looks at a deity to take *darshan*. It is a fresh instantaneous experience that for this participant is a focused and conscious act, as she explains here:

> Participant 6: [When we put the divo on it has begun. That is *Pratyaksa*. It has started. When we blow it out, it has closed.][xxxiv]

The response from Participant 6, as I stated above is on the one hand quite specific but also a little abstract. Like the other participants, it is still directed towards Gods, but the explanation of how it occurs is slightly different. Participant 6 uses terms like *pratyaksa*, *saakshi* and *satsak* to talk about how *darshan* occurs. The term *pratyaksa* is a Sanskrit word that means clear, while *saakshi* is Sanskrit and means to witness and *saksaat*, another Sanskrit term that means direct. I suggest that for Participant 6, *darshan* is, on the one hand, a quick, instantaneous and immediate action; but on the other hand, it can be a long drawn out action, depending on how long your *puja* takes. It seemed that *pratyaksa* could mean several things, it could mean freshness as Participant 6 describes it above, but it is in this response from Participant 6 which describes the term in relation to *darshan*:

> Participant 6 – [The temple when we go in the temple then Gods we do *darshan*. We see face to face that pratyaksha. Now I watch TV its pratyaksa (pauses) I look at you pratyaksa, face to face.]

In other words, for Participant 6 *pratyaksa* is the moment during *darshan* when the devotee comes face to face with the God. The description of freshness implies that each time it is a new and fresh experience. *Saakshi* and *saksaat* are similar in that they refer to witnessing (*saakshi)* or looking directly *(saksaat*) at God.

The responses from the participants to questions about *darshan* suggest that, first and foremost, for these women *darshan* is a conscious practice that is taken from God. This implies that *darshan* is very much a practice that is embedded in religion and, at least initially, it can only be directed at religious figures. However, the idea of a religious figure is open to interpretation; therefore, considering the discussion above, there could be the suggestion that perhaps leaders amongst the Hindu right are positioned as objects of *darshan*. Many of the responses also acknowledged *darshan* is a practice 'you GO to take'. By using the term 'go' there is the suggestion that this action requires the devotee to be active as opposed to passive. It requires some level of active engagement on the behalf of the devotees to go for and receive *darshan*. There is also the suggestion that another form of passivity is also contradicted earlier assumption of devotees asserting no critical understanding of *darshan* as Kaur (2005) highlighted. Participants responses also reinforce conceptualisations by Kaur and Hawkins that darshan is understood through an individual lens, which on occasion can be similar to others but can also differ in many ways. Finally, the response from Participant 6 indicates that there is no length of time within which *darshan* needs to take place. In other words, the exchange of looks between a deity and a devotee can be instantaneous or it can last for the duration of a *puja*. The responses also seem to stem from experience or from an understanding that is personal to them. It is under these parameters that they see *darshan* and partake in it. This personal understanding continues to seep through in the responses in the next section, where I examine the participants' responses to taking *darshan* from television.

4.5.2 *Darshan* from Television

All but one participant of this study, agreed that *darshan* could be taken from television. This understanding mirrors, as I discussed above, Hawkins (1999) findings where she toto found her participants acknowledged that *darshan* could be taken from a screen. Although her findings were focused on the computer screen rather than a television screen. Hawkins (1999:148-149) also highlighted that the participants of her research '[w]hile affirming that *darshan* is indeed realisable from electronically mediated images of Sai Baba, devotees coincidentally denied that these same images should be recipients of either *puja* or prayer' (Hawkins 1999: 148-149). In other words, her participants acknowledge that *darshan* from an image of Sai Baba on a screen is possible; but these screen-based images should not be used or be the focus of rituals. As if to say when conducting a *puja*, it should be towards a murti or in case of guru, it should be to the person in real life. I did not ask my participants about whether using such an image

of deity is possible for puja, nor did they provide any indication as such. Therefore, it is unclear if the participants of this study agree with such an assertion.

I then asked what kind of programmes we could take *darshan* from. The initial response was from religious programmes, for example, programmes on the faith channel Aastha. However, after further consideration, Participants 1, 4 and 5 stated that one could take *darshan* from serials because they often showed *murtis* in shrines or temples. Further to this, the serials also depict characters performing *pujas* (religious rituals), thus allowing audiences to take *darshan* from the images of various deities shown. These responses not only further emphasise the religiously underpinned awareness they have about *darshan*, which was highlighted above; but also, the very personal understanding of *darshan* they have come to follow, as Hawkins highlighted.

Even though Hawkins' participants acknowledged that *darshan* could be taken from the images on the web, many of them stated that they themselves either rarely or never took *darshan* in this way. It seems for Hawkins' participants there is a superficiality they felt when taking *darshan* from an image such as a video or website. Participant 3's response below, similar to Hawkins' respondents, acknowledge that *darshan* can be taken from television but she herself does not. She also emphasises just what kind of television *darshan* can be taken from, specifically, religious or devotional programmes.

> Interviewer: Can someone take *darshan* from television?
>
> Participant 3: [A lot of people do. Yeah, A lot of people do. I don't take it from there so much.]
>
> Interviewer: [OK You don't take it, but other people do. So those people who take *darshan* (from TV) what kind of programmes do they get it from? which ones... like this is Ram...]
>
> Participant 3: Ram and Lakshman
>
> Interviewer: [So can they get it from here?]
>
> Participant 3: [Yeah many people do.]
>
> Interviewer: [But then in others like *Udaan* or errm... in *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, can you take *darshan* from those or not?]
>
> Participant 3: [No because they are just serials aren't they?]
>
> Interviewer: [Ok so from there no?]
>
> Participant 3: [No No That's a serial.]

In this exchange, Participant 3 argues that it was only from religious programmes that one could take *darshan* – whether it be a serial or a sermon. For Participant 3 it was not possible to take *darshan* from a family-based serial. Again, there is a hierarchical emphasis, on this occasion, from what kind of programmes *darshan* can or cannot be taken. Participant 3 suggested a hierarchical nature of *darshan* whereby modern-day sages and gurus are not as renowned as those gurus and sages from Hindu mythology. Therefore, *darshan* from modern day gurus and sages on programmes such as that broadcast on Aastha, is not as effective. For Hawkins' participants the images of Sai Baba on a video or on a website were supplementary or an addition to seeing Sai Baba in the flesh. From the responses above, it is difficult to say for certain, if the *darshan* taken from television is a supplementary form of *darshan*, but Participant 3's response suggests this could be the case at least for herself. Here, again, the responses suggest a very personal understanding of *darshan*.

The response from Participant 2 below, is another example of Kaur's (2005) understanding of reflexive *darshan*, which I discussed above. Kaur argued that reflexive *darshan*, is where the devotee decides what elements are to be believed.

> Participant 2 – Ahh I don't think so. *Darshan* is like actual praying to somebody, and you get it back…If you see someone… this God has arrived we do *darshan*. You know like how we do in the temple…TV I think err… you don't think like that.

Participant 2 was the only participant who thought that because you are not watching television with *darshan* in mind, you cannot take it from television. For her, the practice of *darshan* is something done in a temple, this is her understanding of the concept, highlighting the Kaur's argument of flexibility in conceptualising *darshan*.

This response articulates *darshan* as being active and engaged (conscious act). What is surprising is that Participant 2's regular time to watch television during the week is in the late evening. This is after she has visited the local temple, where part of her visit includes taking *darshan*. The implication here is that, for this participant at least, her engagement and her intention for watching television is very different to the kind of engagement and the intention behind partaking in *darshan*. For Participant 2 watching television is not part of her religious practice, it is for other pleasures which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 5. Earlier in this Chapter (4.2) and in this section, I referred to Hawkins conclusion of how context plays a key

role in a viewer experiencing *darshan* from a screen. Participant 2's responses reinforce this understanding that if the context is not right then *darshan* will not be taken.

Further to this, in Chapter 2 I highlighted how Mankekar (1999) also found her participants engage with the *Ramayana* serial with 'the same reverence they would have accorded a religious ritual: seeing Lord Rama on television became a form of *darshan* for them' (Mankekar, 1999:200). Mankekar argued (as does Lutgendorf, 1995) that the serial invoked darshanic practices from its viewers through the strategies discussed above and previously in Chapter 2 (Mankekar, 1999:200). The camera would often pause with a head and shoulder shot of the character of Rama looking directly at the camera. However, it seemed that some of Mankekar's participants were intentionally watching the serial in order to take *darshan* when opportunities arose; but Mankekar also acknowledges that the religious understanding of the serial is not the only one the participants had, they also acknowledged it as an form of entertainment. Similarly, Marie Gillespie (1995a) also observed some of her participants performing a small puja before watching episode of the *Ramayan* (1987) or a devotional film. For some of Gillespie's participants, particularly the Dhani family, watching religious and devotional serials and films was part of their daily worshipping/religious practices. Conversely, it seems for Participant 2 the intention is very different and focused more on perhaps leisure and pleasure, despite preceding her television viewing with regular visits to the temple (which is further discussed in Chapter 6 as part of the participants' routine). This change in intention also may have something to do with the increased access to devotional and religious programming. Gillespie and Mankekar conducted their research in the late 1980s and so their participants had not seen a television adaptation or serialisation of the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* before. While the participants of this study would have been exposed to/be familiar with numerous adaptations of not only these narratives but other religious and devotional programmes as well. Also access to such programming has increased greatly with cable and satellite channels from around the world. The participants of this study did not need to put on a video or a DVD in order to watch the programmes, unlike Gillespies' participants. Further to this it seemed that Gillespies' participants watched the recorded programmes and films alongside other religious television programmes and films they had on VHS, or in isolation as standalone programmes or films. In contrast, my participants are watching religious serials alongside other programmes that are not religious, for example the family-based serials, and so the intention of watching television for my participants is different to those of Gillespie's.

This section has highlighted that the participants acknowledged that *darshan* can be taken from television and continued to emphasise their understanding of *darshan* as being a religious act. However, in order to do so, there is the suggestion that the viewer needs to be fully engaged and looking in a fully focused way. The section also discussed the participants intention around watching television and how it might impact on their looking and engagement, the suggestion being that if the intention to take *darshan* is not with the viewer then darshanic looking will not occur, instead other ways of looking could occur such as fully focused looking, no looking or distracted looking. This can also lead to various forms of engagement occurring, such as full engagement, partial engagement, or no engagement. As Gillespie asserts 'religious belief and a religious mode of consciousness are re-requisites to devotional viewing' (1995a:363), an assertation also made by Mankaker (1999). Gillespie seemed to imply that this was a static, singular form of engagement the viewer needs to have whilst they are watching religious programmes. But Mankaker concluded, there are shifts in the form of engagement. In her case between the religious nature of the programme and the entertainment aspect. I argue that there are multiple changes that can occur but is dependent on various factors which I highlight in Chapter 5, 6 and 7.

4.5.3 Hindutva's appropriation of *darshan*

Going beyond the religious understanding of *darshan* I cannot say for certain if the participants are aware of the subtexts of the serials. The focus on the religious nature of *darshan* above, seems to suggest that for these participants the serials are watched through negotiated engagement and they do not acknowledge the appropriation of *darshan* by the Hindutva agenda. One reason for this could be because the participants see the serials as 'their' media (Browne, 2005, cited in Matsaganis and Katz 2014), and therefore they *forgive* some of the negative aspects of the serials. Gurvinder Aljhu-Sindh found listeners to the radio station BBC Asian Network consider it to be 'their' media and so if they heard certain, namely negative, news stories about the communities, they would forgive the station (Aljhu-Sindh, 2019).

Another reason why the participants ignore, negotiate, and possibly even resist the subtexts could be the highly personal and subjective nature of the responses. Through my analysis I seem to have assumed that media is all powerful and inferring that the audience is passive. The analysis of the scenes I have presented focus on the preferred reading through a political religious lens but the responses suggest that instead there is a specific form of negotiation that

is occurring amongst these participants which is very much based on their personal intersectional history or in other words, their very individualised and nuanced subjectivity. This is similar to many other studies such as Banaji 2006/2012 and 2014; Kaur 2005 and Hawkins, 1999. Banaji concluded that audiences 'develop their own 'pathways' through Hindi films, focusing their attention on details and sequences that have particular relevance to their lives and appeal to their imaginations' (Banaji, 2006/2012:167). For the participants in this study it is not the construction of *darshan* in the serials that is their focus, it might on occasion but the majority of the time, it is much more to do with the characters and the narratives that draws the participants attention and which I examine in more detail in the next chapter.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined what impact the opportunities to take *darshan* from the serials may have on ways of looking and forms of engagement with television. The analysis of scenes from family-based serials and a religious serial established several scenarios in which *darshan* is presented to viewers. The scenarios included opportunities to take *darshan* from images of Hindu deities, actors in the role of Hindu deities, important figures and lead male characters. Each scene used conventions highlighted in earlier work by Babb (1981), Lutgendorf (1995), Prasad (1998) and Vasudevan (2000). These conventions included full frontal framing, intercutting of shots between viewpoint and point of view shots as well the pause at the tableaux moment. The opportunities were mostly mediated by a character who was seeking *darshan* or via the director. Finally, music was commonly used to indicate a deity was on screen or acknowledge the tableaux moment and the exchange of looks having taken place. Another convention was the perspective given to viewers from the object of *darshan*. Whether it was the murtis of Radha-Krishna or Shiva, or the King Janak the audience were only presented with viewpoint shots. This use of the viewpoint shot suggested that the producers prefer and encourage audiences to only identify with the subordinate character in the scenes of *darshan* discussed above.

I then highlighted how these opportunities were embedded with subtexts promoting a Hindutva ideology, largely through the iconography within the scenes. The sets, costumes, use of icons used in religious festivals and colour schemes all suggested a Hindutva message lay within the serials. I suggested that the opportunities could provoke darshanic looking to occur as momentary switch from either fully focused looking to partial looking. While I cannot say for certain what ways of looking or forms of engagement may have occurred during these scenes,

I suggest that the producers may be making assumptions about the viewers. It could be possible that the producers assume the viewers are only looking in a distracted way and are only partially engaged, it is for this reason that tableaux moments where opportunities to take *darshan* are repeated.

The chapter also examined the participants understanding of *darshan* and whether they thought it could be taken from television. The findings indicate that for these participants *darshan* is first and foremost a religious act that is directed towards God. *Darshan* is an act that requires the person seeking the exchange to be active. The active understanding of darshan and the religious connotations of the exchange were also understood in relation to opportunities on television. As above, the findings highlighted that for these participants they need to be conscious of the fact they want to take darshan, therefore the suggestion is they need to be looking at the television (perhaps either fully or partially) and engaged (either fully or partially) with the action and narrative. Thus, when the opportunity does arise to take darshan they can do so, and for this moment engage with the serial darshanically and return to another form of engagement once the moment passes.

The findings also indicated that if the participant does not watch television with the intention of taking *darshan* then they will not look or engage in a darshanic or spiritual manner. If this is the case then other ways of looking such as fully focused looking, partial looking or no looking may occur; and other forms of engagement, such as fully engaged, partially engaged could occur. My findings suggest that the participants are engaged in an active manner with the serials as it is through their own subjectivity and deeply personalised lens through, which they make meaning of the serials and through negotiated engagement potentially ignore the political subtexts of the Hindu right.

In this chapter I have focused mostly on the visual and aural aspects of the serials to highlight how they may influence a viewer's looking and engagement. In the next chapter my focus remains on the serials themselves but this time I turn to the characters and the narratives of the serials to see what impact they may have on looking and engagement.

Chapter 5: Pleasure and Narrative Serials

5.1 Introduction

In the chapter, I will explore the dynamics of pleasure the participants garner from the serials. I discuss how participants find pleasure in identifying with certain characters, recognising visual aesthetics, and seeing handsome male characters. I further argue that not all pleasure is garnered from positive aspects, such as those described above. Pleasure is also garnered from additional elements, such as experiencing emotional realism that is represented in the serials, seeing villainous characters and narratives becoming nonsensical. The pleasurable elements can influence different ways of looking to occur, namely fully focused looking, distracted looking, no looking. In terms of engagement, these additional elements of pleasure can assist in full engagement, partial engagement, no engagement, negotiated engagement and ruptured engagement.

I defined the characterisations of looking and engagement in the introduction; which are fully focused looking refers to the viewers' is looking at the television screen for the entire time they are watching. Distracted looking refers to looking are short glimpses, lasting from a few seconds to few minutes. No looking refers to times when there is no look towards the television for long periods of time. Being fully engaged refers to a viewer is entirely immersed in the programme they are watching. No engagement is when the viewer has not been following the programme they are watching. Partial engagement refers to times when the viewer has some knowledge of what has occurred, narratively in the programme they are watching. Ruptured engagement refers to moments when the viewer is pulled or ripped out of the diegetic world of the programme they are watching. Negotiated engagement refers to times when the viewer becomes critical about aspects the serials they are watching.

In the previous chapter, I examined how *darshan* is presented to audiences through the visual and aural aesthetics of the serials. In this chapter, I focus much more on narrative themes and the personalities of characters in the serials to understand how they may have an impact on ways of looking and forms of engagement. For these participants, pleasure is complex and not simply associated with looking at television, but also stems from multisensory (such as listening as well as looking) ways of engaging with the serials. The chapter also begins to explore the fluidity of different forms of engagement, as the participants indicate actively watching the serials through their critical understanding of narratives, characters, and visual aesthetics.

I will begin the chapter by first examining how some of the narrative in the serials becomes repetitive and how it may influence the participants engagement and their ways of looking. In the second section, I examine emotional pleasure first examining pleasurable emotion with discussions of how the participants identify with characters. This section of the chapter highlights how the inclusion of villains and their roles in the serials can influence some of the participants not to look at the television. In the third section, I examine how identifying with the emotional realism of characters within the serials can play a role in pleasurable viewing. Emotional realism is a term coined by Ien Ang (1985) and refers to how actors in serials realistically portray emotions the character they play is feeling. In the final section, I examine how pleasure and displeasure can be found from visual aspects such as recognising sets and locations and seeing handsome and good-looking characters.

5.2 Narratives themes and Buckwas (Nonsense)

5.2.1 Narrative Themes & Subject matter

This section focuses on themes, and topics, of the stories told in the serials. Dorothy Hobson (2003:81) states that 'soap operas tell stories. The stories are told through the medium of the characters in any soap opera'. In other words, the characters in a soap opera are important as it is their stories that are being told to the viewers. Christine Geraghty (1991:11) further outlines key features of soap opera narratives, first narratives are not entirely resolved, even when the soap opera ends and will no longer be broadcast; and, second, their use of cliff-hangers to allow a story line to continue from one episode to the next. This lack of resolution, at the end of each episode, allows viewers to build a relationship with certain characters, or, become familiar with the characters' history, and background (Geraghty,1991:14). Giving viewers the space to build these relationships, and learn, about a characters' history allows viewers to become much more immersed in the programme. For example, Participant 2, finds she can escape and get carried away with the narratives. Here she adds to this by stating,

> it's more like love stories, some… some like tragedy thrillers sometimes. So I just like to watch it. I'm interested in what is going to happen next. So I'm waiting for next day to …But it still takes that long... long to finish it off.

The participant begins by referring to the range of different kinds of themes that are embedded into the narratives. The implication being that one narrative, alone, can be a blend of tragedy, thrill, as well as romance. By blending these themes together there is a suggestion that the viewer can experience a range of emotion from not just one narrative. There is, also, a

possible indication of how engaged the participant is with the serial. In order to experience the variety of emotions, the participant, is at least partially engaged, if not, fully engaged. Participant 2 also acknowledges that she wants to know what will happen after each episode, and she does eagerly await the next episode. This further suggests that the participant is engaged in some form, whether it is fully or partially. However, the latter part of the quote, acknowledges her frustration with the duration of some narratives, and the slow pace in which the narratives develop. This could suggest the participant loses interest in the serial and begins to watch it with some distance.

5.2.2 Loss of interest in narratives

Watching the serials with some distance is not too dissimilar to Ien Ang's (1985) findings, who acknowledged, that participants took pleasure from ironic distance when watching *Dallas*. Ang's participants saw *Dallas* as a text that is not very good, but they were still able to experience pleasure from it through 'mockery and irony' (Ang, 1985:97). One group of letter writers seems 'to make *Dallas* the object of derision' (Ang, 1985:97). Ang argued that one of the most important elements about ironic looking is the way in which the viewers talk about the programmes. This commentary allows the participants to read the text differently. In the case of Ang's participants and *Dallas*, the ironic and mocking of the programme allows them to see it more as a comedy as opposed to a serious melodrama (Ang, 1985:98). This transgression, or, inversion of preferred meaning is also reciprocated by the participants, beginning here with the acknowledgment of the slow pace narratives move and thus extending the duration of narrative. There is a suggestion here, that these factors, may lead the participants to engage with the serial; in, first a ruptured manner but later perhaps in an negotiated form. This is an aspect I examine further in the next section in relation to nonsensical narratives.

Nonsensical narratives, in other words, storylines that are unrealistic, are commonly found in soap operas and serials. Geraghty (1991:19) remarked that viewers of soap operas are ready, and willing, to allow storylines to be 'stretched, parodied and broken'. In other words, Geraghty acknowledged that audiences are aware that soap operas can, and will, bring in unrealistic storylines, but it is accepted as part of the genre. Therefore, potentially outrageous, and unlikely narratives, will be tolerated. For example, a character who is believed to have died, comes back from the dead months or years later is accepted. I found that the participants tolerated some unrealistic narratives in the prime-time Hindi serials. There was

frustration amongst some of the participants regarding the narratives of serials continuing for too long, as illustrated by Participant 2 above, but another frustration was also highlighted, which was the use of the same or similar themes being used over and over. An example of the latter is particularly noted with the serial *Sasural Simar Ka* (*At the Home of Simar's In- Laws*). During the observations Participants 4 and 5 kept referring to how the narratives of this serial became "*buckwas*" - nonsensical. They both commented on how *Sasural Simar Ka* continued to use the narrative of characters becoming possessed by demonesses and evil spirits. Participant 5 described how at first when the narrative introduced the first possessed character it was something novel to watch. As the narrative moved on the spirit/demoness was banished, and the character returns to normal. However, soon after another character then became possessed by a different spirit/demoness. It is at this point Participant 5 thought the narrative began to become "*buckwas*". At the time of the observations yet another character (a third person) had become possessed. By this time Participant 5 refused to watch the serial and would leave the room when it came on, a factor that I want to discuss also in relation to past experiences of watching television in Chapter 6. Here, it is important to draw attention to how Participant 5 cited the *"buckwas"* nature of the narrative as being the main reason for her no longer looking at or engaging with the serial. The response from Participant 5 highlights the changing tastes of viewers, especially amongst these participants. Later in this section I examine in more detail, a viewers' loyalty to a programme and in relation to Ang (1985) discussion of what elements of a soap opera may led to viewers abandoning a soap opera they may have watched for years, for an entirely new programme.

Participant 4 also referred to *Sasural Simar Ka* as becoming *"buckwas"*. During one observation the Participant was flicking through channels during an advert break on Rishtey, and we came across *Sasural Simar Ka*. The Participant stops at the programme for a few moments. It is at this point Participant 4 tells me that they, presumably the programme-makers, have made the narrative all "*buckwas*". I ask if the serial has been broadcast for a while and the participant says it has. Participant 4 repeats the previous statement about how the narrative has become *"buckwas"* and expands on how it has become "*buckwas"*. She explains that recently the serial has introduced a supernatural theme that revolves around a character becoming possessed by an evil spirit and it is for this reason the narrative has become nonsensical. Participant 4 does acknowledge, however, that when the serial began the narratives were good. Participant 4 goes on to tell me that once a narrative in a serial becomes *"buckwas"* she loses interest and begins to watch other serials on other channels. The switching of channels was also

underscored by Participant 3. She did not use the term *"buckwas"*, however she does voice her annoyance at the way serials can go on for too long. She states how when some serials begin broadcasting, they are good and watchable. Nevertheless, as a serial is broadcast the participant felt the narratives become repetitive or silly, and in turn they become boring. She prefers the serials to stop after a good amount of time, but the participant does not explicitly state how long a serial should run. This longevity in the serials can lead the participant to change channels and begin watching another serial.

The findings suggest that the participants are willing to accept some narratives even though they may seem 'stretched' (Geraghty, 1991:19). Possession is a common phenomenon in some formations of Hinduism. The phenomenon has two forms, 'a distinction is made between invited, or voluntary, possession by a deity, and uninvited, or involuntary, possession by a malevolent spirit (*Bhuta*)' (Johnson, 2009:np). The Participants seem to be familiar with the idea that possession is possible and seeing it represented in the serials may have at first seemed novel. However, the participants find the repetitive use of the possession narrative irritating. Participant 4 and 5's responses also implies that the more the narrative was repeated they were viewed with a level of cynicism, which is similar to the Ang's conclusions, discussed below. Above I highlighted the changing nature and tastes of the participants as at first implausible narratives maybe accepted and enjoyed. But this can change over time, particularly if they are repeated in quick succession. The impact of this on looking at and forms of engagement for these participants is that they do not look or engage with this serial and find another one to look at and engage with.

Participants are willing to switch between serials and channels and one of the reasons as to why has been discussed above, but the responses from the participants also suggest other reasons as well. Ang (1985) argued further that when viewers are no longer able to recognise with the world of the soap opera, whether due to disruption from the diegetic world or through other changes such as a change in characters, or sets, the serial can lose the viewers' loyalty. In other words, once audiences can no longer see elements the serial's diegesis they feel they can relate to, the audiences begin to turn away from the programme. Mary Ellen Brown (1987) also explored this occurrence, she noted that her participants chose a soap opera to watch and 'once a soap is chosen, fans usually remain loyal until there is a substantial change in their soap which causes them to change loyalties' (Brown, 1987:7). The findings above indicate that my participants remained loyal to the serials they were watching, in a

similar vein to May Ellen Brown's participants. However, as Ang argued, if viewers find they can no longer relate to the themes and the topics addressed in the narrative, viewers will no longer enjoy watching the serial. This was evident in my findings, whereby, the participants displayed their unhappiness about serials in different ways; either by leaving the room or changing channels. The findings from the observations of Participants 3 and 4 highlighted their preference was to change channels and replace the serial they believed has turned to *"buckwas"*. In contrast to these practices, Participant 5 did not change channels or switch the television off, instead she removed herself from the space entirely. This was surprising but, it begins to bring to light just what impact historical experiences of television might have on contemporary viewing practices. The historical experience of watching television is discussed in more detail in the following chapter; but here I want to explain that Participant 5 may leave the room because when she was younger there was only one television channel to watch. Therefore, if a programme or scene came on that the participant did not want to watch she would have to either turn the television set off or leave the room. The availability of numerous channels that broadcast serials is a relatively recent development. Prior to the channels that are available now, participants may have been restricted to not only the number of channels they had access to, but also the number of serials broadcast on each of those channels. During this limited availability of channels, it could have led to the continued viewing of some serials even though the participants may have thought the narrative had become nonsensical. However, now with multiple channels all dedicated to serials, and occasionally light entertainment programmes, they have the freedom to switch. If the viewers feel they can no longer identify with the diegesis of one serial, there are others that can take its place.

The findings from this section highlight the kind of impact the subject matter of the and the pace it moves can have on a viewers' looking and engagement with the serials. The responses suggest that initially the novelty of a new subject matter or topic of a narrative could influence viewers to be fully engaged or at least partially engaged. And thus, look at the screen in a fully focused or distracted way. But these ways of looking and forms of engagement change over time as the subject matter of the narrative becomes repetitive or the pace at which the subject is resolved or moves on is too slow. This can lead to no engagement and no looking thus leading the viewers to abandon the serial entirely, which is evident in the responses from some of the participants above. What is also highlighted to a small extent in the responses is the speed at which the participants abandon a serial they no longer are engaged with. For Participant 3, it seems that her engagement, and her looking, can change quite quickly largely

because she found the pace too slow. Participant 5 seemed to be engaged with and was looking at *Sasural Simar Ka*, longer than Participant 4.

These assertions of how a viewer might be looking and what forms of engagement might be occurring are made with the understanding that no other factors are influencing the viewer, in other words they are watching the serial in an ideal imagined environment. However, as I will discuss in the following two chapters it is not always possible to watch every episode of a serial with a fully focused look with full engagement. There will be fluctuations but I what I am saying here is that because the participants are still engaged in the narrative they will still come back to the serial until such a time they find themselves no longer engaged.

Beyond the impact of the subject matter and the pace of the narrative, the context above continues to provide evidence for the idea that these participants are using their own knowledge and experiences to understand the serials as initially discussed in Chapter 4. The participants are negotiating the content of the programmes using their experiences to make meanings. Work around this area in the South Asian context can be seen in the responses Banaji (2006) receives from her participants. Her participants' often turn to their unique knowledge and experiences of family and friends to contextualise how they understand the dynamics and politics of films such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995, *The Lover will Carry the Bride Away*). Many of the responses Banaji discussed were directly linked to certain scenes, or, to the actions of characters in the films. As this research is focused on a long form medium my participants linked their experiences with narrative themes rather than key scenes. The next section focuses on a discussion of how the participants of this research do also relate to the actions of key characters in the serial in a similar way to Banaji's respondents.

5.3 Pleasure from Characters

In this section I discuss ways in which the participants identify with the characters in the serials and how these identifications may impact on ways of looking and forms of engagement. Before going into more detail of the findings, it is important to reiterate some of the frameworks that have been used to understand audiences and how they identify with media. In Chapter 2 I highlighted that in scholars (Mulvey, 1975 and 1981; Doane, 1981) working in relation to film initially focused on the psychoanalytical forms of identification. These foregrounded identification through sexual relations and desires. These identifications seemed to come to an end once the audience left the auditorium. Jackie Stacey (1994) argued this was

not always the case. Identification can stem from the audiences' formations of personhood and life experiences. Furthermore, they can continue beyond the cinema auditorium and into the audiences' real lives. Prasad (1998) highlighted identification being used to interpellate audiences for ideological gains. Much of the construction of the identification was grounded in Zizek psychoanalysis of symbolic and imaginary identification. Identification is complex and dependent on various factors. The studies discussed above focused on identification in relation to film; but similar formation of identification have also been put forward regarding television. John Fiske (1987/2011) does outline similar forms of identification in relation to television and refers to them as total (psychological) identification, and ideological (interpellated) identification. A further form of identification was also cited by Fiske (1987/2011), active identification (also referred to as implication as understood by Davies (1984)). Active identification refers to the positions the audience can put themselves in, which ca lead them to wonder from character to character and thus identify through different formations of their personhood.

Viewers of soap operas and serials have the potential to identify with numerous characters. In serials many narratives run alongside each other, all involving different characters with the occasional overlap. The serial takes turns to spotlight a specific narrative until its climax, then moves on to the next. Both Mary Ellen Brown (1987 in Fiske 1987/2011) and Tania Modleski (1979) argued that audiences are not only given multiple forms of identification, but are encouraged to identify with numerous characters. Brown (1987 in Fiske 1987/2011) explained that a viewers' identification with characters is complicated, and that they can waver, as well as, oscillate between different viewing positions. Therefore, viewers implicate themselves to characters, 'an implicatory reading would imply that an audience chooses a reading position which recognizes discursive possibilities' (Brown, 1987 in Fiske, 1987/2011:174). In other words, a viewer can choose which character or characters to identify with and the positions those characters have been given within the text. The audience may also choose to move from character to character during viewing, or even reject all identifications offered. Tania Modleski (1979) argued that in a soap opera the viewer is not allowed to simply just identify with one character, there are multiple identifications to be had, 'a viewer might at one moment be asked to identify with a woman finally reunited with her lover, only to have that identification broken in a moment of intensity and attention focused on the suffering of the woman's rival' (Modleski, 1979:14). That is to say, the viewer will be able to identify with one character for part of a scene; but it will then cut away to another scene where the viewer identifies with

other characters. When the viewer returns to the previous scene, it will be from another characters' point of view, not the original character. Thus, the viewer is given multiple points of view but never given just one point of view that allows them to follow one character as they complete one entire action (Modleski, 1979). Ien Ang (1985) concurs that in soap operas, viewers are given opportunities to identify with numerous characters, but she adds that it is not merely just the character that the viewers recognise and identify with, it is combined with that character's 'position within the context of the narrative as a whole: only in relation to other characters in the narrative is her or his personality brought out' (Ang, 1985:29). In other words, identification with the character only works or becomes possible when that character is seen within the whole framework of the narrative.

Further to this, Carol J. Clover's (1992) study of horror films also makes useful observations of the kinds of characters audiences of horror films take a liking to. Borrowing from Paul Comisky and Jennings Bryant (1982), Clover notes that audiences not only like positive and good characters, but they also like characters who are vulnerable, helpless, and who often find themselves in powerless situations (Clover, 1992). Clover further argues that it is with these characters the audience can become anxious about and involved with (Clover, 1992:221). Even though Comisky and Bryant do not specify what gender the characters are they referring to, Clover does highlight that the traits described are commonly associated with female characters. However, there is a limitation to these descriptive traits in that there is no discussion of how characters, who are helpless, and powerless, can overcome the situations in which they are placed. Comisky and Bryant (1982, cited in Clover, 1992) define these character traits in reference to how films create suspense which Clover re-appropriates to horror, thus giving the impression that in horror films likeable characters do not overcome the situations in which they are placed, unlike similar characters in serials.

During the interviews, I asked participants if they liked any of the characters in the serials, they were either currently watching, or in other serials no longer being broadcast. Some of the participants named female characters they liked. The characters that named were also the main protagonists in their respective serials. Participants 1, 4 and 5 mentioned Chakor, the main female protagonist from the serial *Udaan* (*Flight*, 2014 -, Colors), played by the actor Spandan Chaturvedi. At the time of the interviews, Chakor was a young girl aged about seven years, who is an indentured labourer like her parents. The participants stated they liked her strength and her thoughtful nature as Participant 4 states here:

> The little girl… she's very strong. Strong character. And she does whatever she wants to do. She does it. Strong character. Very Strong.

Some of the participants also liked the performance of the actor playing Chakor. Participant 1 mentioned that she liked the way she acted:

> the way they act and the way they, you know, think about things. The elder people don't think the way she - little girl - does. And she's got more [pauses] she she knows what she's talking about and what she wants to do and what she wants to do for others… [like that. [That's why I like it.][1]

While Participant 5 stated she liked how she spoke:

> I like her character now her name I think Chakor. It's nice. Small girl and that's… acting is nice. [Her language I like it... [she speak a different language. Speaks like she's from the village]. I like that.

There are two forms of analysis I want to discuss in relation to these responses. Firstly, I will discuss how the responses suggest that the participants identify with the characters, through aspects of their personhood. The responses also imply there is evidence of self-reflexion. Secondly, I will discuss how the responses highlight the participants' analytical understanding of the serials through their acknowledgement of acting and slippage between thinking of the character as a real person and as an actor playing a role.

The responses seem to indicate that the participants find pleasure in various personality traits Chakor seems to embody, particularly, her strength and thoughtfulness. Participant 4's response seems to talk about the strength of the character with admiration. The term "strong" is also repeated numerous times in the response suggests this is the focus of her pleasure. It is difficult to know for certain, if this is a personality trait the participant wishes she had (wish-fulfilment) or if this is a trait, she does have and thus recognisers herself within the character.

In addition to the strength of the character, there is a comment on her independence "she does whatever she wants". The personality trait of strength acts as a counter to her other traits. In other words, Chakor is a character with two sides, on the one hand she epitomises the vulnerable and helpless aspects described above; also the narrative often places her in situations which makes her seem like she is powerless to do anything (Paul Comisky and

[1] Square brackets indicate the response has been translated from Gujarati.

Jennings Bryant (1982, in Clover, 1992). And then on the other hand, she has strength and knows how to overcome any vulnerability and situation she is placed in. The autonomy of characters, particularly female protagonists, was also commented on by Banaji's (2006) participants in relation to the character of Simran in the film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenage*. The participant talked about how Simran had to ask her father for permission to go on a picnic. An element she particularly related to as her father was just as strict as the one in the film. However, with my participants there seems to be only a superficial identification occurring the Chakor's autonomy. What I mean by this is that in the serial, it may seem as though Chakor is doing what she wants, but the consequences of these actions can lead to Chakor being punished, and put into precarious situations. But the responses above at least only suggest that they focus more on the ability to do what she wants as opposed to the outcomes of that action. It seems the participants my participants admire and perhaps also want the ability to make their own decisions and this is aspect is what brings them pleasure.

Participant 5's response also suggests there is some self-reflection/self-identification in her acknowledgement of liking how the character speaks. It is unclear if it is because of how she may have spoken herself when she was younger or if it is a reflection on a memory of her own daughter at a similar age to the character. Similarly, there is some self-reflection in the character Participant 2 likes:

> You know that ko… Kokila in Saathiya… yeah she's like very strict. But I'm not but I think I should be like...

Here Participant 2 is referring to the matriarch of the serial *Saath Nibhaana Saathiya* (*Get on with Saathiya*, 2010 – 2017, Star Plus) who helps the shy female protagonist Gopi (Kokila's daughter-in-law), become a more confident woman. It is unclear what Participant 2 means by strict, as it was not a serial, we watched together during the observations I am not certain if the character was strict towards her children and their partners or to all the characters in serial. Nevertheless Participant 2 clearly sees this idea of being stricter is an aspect of the character as something she should be as well. Even though this response indicates there is some aspect of identification in that Participant 2 sees Kokila as a role model, "I think I should be like"; there is also the suggestion that she does not imitate Kokila's strict nature. Another character Participant 2 cites as liking is Amaya from *Tere Shehar Mein* (*In your City*, 2015, Star Plus) and this is how the participant talks about her:

> If something goes wrong her family she don't want to get a bad name of her family […] so she get married to that man

> she gets married herself and then she takes all the blame on herself. [Then everyone blames her that you did this] but she wanted to save [the name so it doesn't get tarnished]"

Likewise, to Participant 1's response to Chakor, Participant 2 also talks about Amaya as if she is a real person. She describes her actions and the lengths the character goes to protect her family. The latter part of the response is a description that seems to indicate frustration with other characters who cannot see what Amaya has done for her family. There is a feeling from the participant that Amaya has been treated unjustly. This feeling seems to re-emphasise her admiration but also potentially begins to highlight that characters' experience is potentially reflecting the participants' own experience. There is a sense of admiration coming from Participant 2's description of how the character protects the family's *Izzet* or honour. A family's honour and standing in most South Asian cultures, Hindu, Islamic or Sikh, is dependent upon the chastity of the women and girls. '*Izzat*, with its contraries *beijjit* (disgrace; adjective *beizzat*) and *sharm* (shame), denotes a key value which underlies norms in Punjabi [and other South Asian] culture' (Gillespie, 1995:152). As I have stated previously Gillespie's research was undertaken over 30 years ago, but as the participant's observation of the character has highlighted the concept of safeguarding and keeping the family honour is still very much a part of modern day contemporary lives amongst not only South Asian cultures and communities but also some Middle Eastern cultures as well. Disgracing the family honour can have severe consequences from 'torment, humiliation, persecution and horrific murder of young lovers [male and female] by their own relatives across swathes of India and even, on occasion, in the diaspora' (Banaji, 2006/2012:73). Awareness and further publicity of honour-based violence has increased, in the U.K. some more but still very much in the margins alongside broader issues around other forms of domestic violence.

These findings highlight what elements of the serial narrative would allow the participants to be fully engaged. The responses emphasise a deepened emotional immersion which is indicated by the self-reflexion of Participant 5 and potentially Participant 2. This form of engagement initially implies fully focused looking could be occurring. Further to this, other ways of looking, such as distracted looking could also occur, and yet the participant can still maintain full engagement. This deep emotional immersion in the serials is also underscored by the way in which the participant slip, between talking about the actor, and the characters which I discuss in more detail below.

As I stated above, these responses also highlight the participants' critical understanding of the texts. They do this through their discussion of the performance of the actors, as well as, through their fluctuating discussion of the characters and actors. The responses from Participants 1 and 5 refer to the acting as an aspect they like; suggesting that performance is a key factor to their pleasure. These participants, particularly Participant 5, referred to the acting of another actor from the serial *Jhansi Ki Rani* (2009 – 2011, ZEE TV). In the response below, Participant 5 describes how she liked the two actors who played the lead role of Lakshmibai in the serial; the actors played a younger and older version of the same character. The response continues to emphasis on performance being a source of enjoyment.

> "[I used to like as well the acting. Both the smaller *Jhansi ki Rani* and after she was grown up]".

In the participants' description of Chakor there was an oscillation between talking about her as a real person and as an actor playing a role. Ang also observed how viewers imagined soap opera characters as real people. Through her study, Ang (1985:30) found her participants talk about characters from *Dallas* 'in the same way as we talk about people in daily life: in terms of character traits'. This interchangeable description can be seen in Participant 1's response. She flows from talking about Chakor as a real person to talking about Chakor as a character and back again. The way Participant 1 talks about Chakor and the emphasis on performance suggests that there is a fluidity in the different forms of engagement occurring.

These responses seem to indicate that viewers can be both critical in their viewing practices but also remain engaged and immersed in the serials as well. Kaur (2005) argued that British south Asian diasporic audiences watching popular Hindi language films engage with them in a dual manner. This critical yet immersed kind of engagement was conceptualised by Kaur (2005) as reflexive spectatorship. The participants of her research stated, there are some elements of the films they do find themselves completely immersed in, for example the song and dance sequences. However, there are elements that bring them out of the immersion, and they find themselves being critical of the narrative. The responses from the participants above imply this reflexive spectatorship is occurring with television as well. I refer to this form of engagement as negotiated, where the participant is critical of some aspects of the serial and a distance is created but at the same time other elements of the serial keep them immersed. Another factor that implies a negotiated or reflexive form of viewing occurring is the identification and pleasure found through the strong female characters in the serials. This

identification can be seen as an example of the partaking in patriarchal imaginaries presented in the serial, whilst challenging them in their everyday lives, as discussed in Chapter 4.

These responses and the discussion imply that the participants are fully engaged in the serials, which is emphasised by their knowledge of the character personality traits. As well as in their descriptions which slip between talking about the characters as real people and as actors. However, these descriptions and the discussion of an actor's performance also indicate a negotiated form of engagement. Therefore, these findings begin to highlight that engagement is not static but rather fluid and in flux even perhaps whilst watching a single episode in addition to watching an entire series. It is difficult to decipher exactly how the participants looked at the television during these forms of engagement, but there is an implication that fully focused looking could be occurring. This assumption is largely based on the participants knowledge of the actors' performances. The next section continues discussing characters, this time disliked characters, and provides further support to the findings highlighted above.

5.4 Pleasure from Disliked Characters

The section above, focused on characters the participants liked in the serials they were watching. I want to examine what pleasures, if any, are garnered from characters who are not as likeable. What impact might these characters have on the participants' ways of looking, and forms of engagement. Above, likeable characters seemed to enable fully focused or distracted looking and full or partial engagement to occur.

Not all characters in serials are there to be liked and identified with by audiences. Modleski (1979:15) argued that there is 'one character whom we are allowed to hate unreservedly; the villainess, the negative image of the spectator's ideal self'. In other words, viewers do not get the opportunity to decide on whether they like or dislike most of the characters in soap operas. However, soap operas do allow viewers to categorically dislike a character, commonly the antagonist of the soap opera, who Modleski, writing about American soaps, says is a woman, and a gendered representation that can also be found in many Hindi language serials.

K. Moti Gokulsing (2004) reiterated Modleski's idea that, good characters were identified with and liked, while villains were highly disliked. Moti Gokulsing observed, through his research, that viewers saw characters in positive or negative light based on character traits. For example, he found that the character of Lala Lahori Ram from *Amanat* (*Deposit*, 1997 – 2002, ZEE TV)

was liked by respondents because of 'his caring and protective attitude towards his daughter' (Moti Gokulsing, 2004:69). Other characteristics respondents found pleasing were loyalty, generosity, and in one case, a character's faith in Indian tradition (Moti Gokulsing, 2004). Respondents did not like rude or revengeful characters in the serials. They despised characters who were unscrupulous and dishonest (Moti Gokulsing, 2004:69-70). Moti Gokulsing also found that it is not only the characters that audiences identify with but also the incident represented in the serials but fails to outline what kind of incident his respondents were referring too.

I also want to again draw on Clovers' (1992) useful analysis of audience responses to horror films as there are several observations that can be relevant here. Clover observes how horror films perpetuate a specific response from its audiences, that of 'pleasure/pain response' (Clover, 1992:223). The pleasure/pain response refers to masochistic pleasure garnered from seeing painful and fearful scenes. Clover highlights how other genres of film also offer its audiences this pleasure/pain. Drawing on Mary Ann Doane's (1987) work, Clover includes 'sentimental genres', also referred to as 'weepies' (Clover, 1992:223). I take this idea further, and argue that it is also a response found on television, including serials. There are two further observations from Clovers' analysis that are useful here in analysing the responses from the participants in relation to serials. The first observation refers to Clover's reiteration of Modleski's idea that audiences are given numerous characters with which to identify. Clover argued that in horror films there is fluidity in the different perspectives open to audiences, particularly in slasher horror films. The film allows for audience sympathies and identification to move from a killers' perspective to the victims' point of view (Clover, 1992). The second observation draws on Noel Carroll's (1990) argument that horror films provide 'a set of instructions about the appropriate way the audience is supposed to respond' (Carroll, 1990 in Clover, 1992:221). For Carroll these instructions are based on the relationship between the audience and the 'positive, human characters' (Clover, 1992:221) in the film. Through this relationship the audience have a physical response to the fear they see on the screen.

During the observations and later in the interviews it became clear that there were some characters that were not popular with some of the participants. This observation came when Participant 3 and 4, were updating me on the plot of the serials we were watching. Whilst watching *Santoshi Maa* with Participant 3, she explained to me the premise of the serial. It was a new serial, only having started airing the previous week to when the observations took place.

As Participant 3 explained the premise, she highlighted how Santoshi's paternal aunts and uncles had taken Santoshi's inheritance after her parents' death. They then tried to abandon her in the forest. Participant 3 continues to explain that they have also taken money away from Santoshi's paternal grandmother and are trying to make her leave their home too. The response confirms Modleski's idea that the one character in soap opera viewers can dislike is the villain. In the case of this example, it is predominately Santoshi's elder paternal aunt. But she is not alone as her husband and younger brother in law and his wife are also portrayed as the villains.

Other characters the participants did not like were again villains in the serials. While talking about *Udaan* Participant 5 made it very clear that she did not like the character of the landlord whom she calls Malik (a name given to the chief of a village).

> Participant 5 – the big guy in the Village. I don't like him… Malik (inaudible) I don't like his acting… I don't like the way he looks. I don't like it when he's acting cool like. Sometimes you think how can they take such a role? We don't like watching it so why are they doing it Yeah. How can they act so cruel?

Conversely to Modleski's traditional presentation of a villainess, this participant cites a male character as the villain. She highlights his stature and general build which invokes disdain from this participant and potentially from the wider female audience. This, disdain is extended into the way he conducts himself, and his overall performance, especially, when he acts cruelly towards Chakor. The participants' response outlines her involuntary reaction to turn away from the screen when she sees such acts. The effect these scenes has on the participant indicates she is still listening and heavily engaged with the serial even though she is not looking at the scene, thus emphasising engagement is multi-layered. This emphasis continues with the participant's description of the villain which highlights her critical understanding and possible viewing perspective. In this instance, the description the participant gave of the villain slips between talking about the character as an actor but also talking about the character as a real person. The latter part of the quote indicates an acknowledgement that the participant is aware of the differentiation between character and actor. Again, this slippage indicates the participant is fully engaged but also a negotiated form of engagement with the programme. Also, similarly to my discussion above, the negotiated engagement is not causing the participant to distance herself from the programme, it seems here that the immersion continues.

These findings highlight three key aspects of pleasure that can influence engagement and looking. Firstly, disliked characters were described in similar ways to liked characters in that the participants moved from talking about the character as a real person to talking about the actor. This again, suggests that the participants are fully engaged with the serials even when characters they do not like are presented. In addition to full engagement, negotiated engagement also seems to be occurring. Secondly, the findings suggest that different ways of looking can occur when disliked characters are presented. Participant 5's response indicates that the disliked characters' actions are unpopular to the extent that she turned away from the screen, implying no looking but still fully engaged. It is also through these responses that the anxiety she feels for the main character, Chakor, is highlighted, which suggests that distracted looking can occur. During the observation, Participant 3 did not completely turn away from the screen when characters in *Santoshi Maa* she did not like were presented. Instead, she alternated between looking at the screen and looking at me. Finally, the findings acknowledge that, despite there being characters the participants do not like, they can still be immersed in and find a form of cathartic pleasure or emotion release from the serials. thus, implying they are fully engaged. This lends support to the concept developed by Clover (1992) whereby audiences can still garner pleasure through pain. These findings are adding further support to the understanding of how complex and multifaceted looking, engagement, and pleasure are. In the next section I continue to examine these complexities in relation to not only characters themselves but also emotion. The section also further examines the catharsis felt by participants as they watch serials.

5.5 Pleasure through identifying with characters and emotional realism

Having discussed pleasure garnered from characters that are liked and disliked, as well as the impact on different ways of looking, and forms of engagement. I want to now turn to the topic of finding pleasure through identifying with the storylines the characters, often the characters the participants like, are involved in. Purnima Mankekar (1999) highlighted how her participants responded to a narrative strand of the *Mahabharat* (1989). The narrative strand led to one of the main female characters, Draupadi, being disrobed in front of her husbands and in-laws.[xxxv] Mankekar found that female characters, who transgressed against the traditional ideals of what it is to be an Indian woman, were punished; and this punishment had a profound effect on her participants. Focusing on the scene of Draupadi's humiliation Mankekar's participants conveyed to her that the scene came to represent women's vulnerability and her participants could see their own struggles as women in India. This

vulnerability of women in India was highlighted time and again to Mankekar by one of her participants, Sushmita. Sushmita was able to identify, that as a future daughter in law herself, what has happened to Draupadi could happen to her once she is married. Her mother tells Mankekar that:

> My daughter, when she saw [what happened], cried and cried. She cried all morning. Imagine what happened to Draupadi! And in public, in front of her in-laws! A feeling came to my daughter: what will happen to me when I get married and go to my in-laws' home? (Sushmita's Mother in Mankekar, 1999:241).

The quote highlights how deeply the participant was affected by what she had seen. Mankekar found that 'for some an intimate engagement with her disrobing enabled them to rupture hegemonic constructions of Hindu/Indian Womanhood' (Mankekar, 1999:240). The quote establishes how Sushmita was ruptured from the diegetic world of the serial placed and thought about her own circumstances. But Sushmita's concerns were largely to do with the lack of dowry her family were not able to provide and so if her in-laws humiliated her, how she might protect herself; as opposed to challenge the hegemonic status quo (Mankekar, 1999). Mankekar suggests that the scene that followed, where Draupadi chastises the men around her for doing nothing, was an opportunity for female viewers to challenge the hegemonic status quo. Mankekar's participants saw that as a representation of the power of women's rage. Draupadi's defiance after her ordeal acted as a trigger to challenge the norm.

Sushmita's deep emotional response to the scene can be theorised through the idea of 'emotional realism' (Ang: 1985). Through her study of the American soap opera *Dallas*, Ang (1985) argued that soap operas offer their viewers 'emotional realism' (Ang, 1985:45). In other words, the emotion of the characters that is portrayed in the soap operas is realistically depicted, almost as if the characters are genuinely feeling the emotions they are representing. Seeing this emotional realism in characters can bring pleasure in many ways; as Ang (1985:83) explained:

> Experiencing pleasure is not a conscious, directed activity (although one can strive for it), but is something that 'happens', something which comes over the viewer according to his or her feelings. The experience is diffuse, bound to time and context, heterogeneous: so much is going on in the viewer's head.

What Ang argues here is that pleasure is not something the TV viewer is aware of while they are watching television. Pleasure is an emotional experience that depends on various factors such as when, where, and what. This emotional experience is also not necessarily positive, they

can be negative and uncomfortable as well. An example of what Ang is referring to is given by Karen Lury (2005), who talks about her happy memories as a child of watching Saturday early evening family television with her family which she later experienced again with her own children. But pleasure can also be garnered by having an emotional release in the way Mankekar's participants did with the scene of Draupadi's disrobing.

During the interviews with Participants 1 and 5 I had a similar response from them regarding a scene from the historical serial *Jhansi ki Rani (The Queen of Jhansi)*. The serial is based on the true story, of Lakshmibai, a queen who ruled over a small state during the British colonisation of India. The narrative of the serial follows Lakshmibai as she becomes a young independent woman and through marriage comes to rule over a kingdom. The serial is an attempt to be a biography of the queen with some fictionalisation. The scene that the participants highlighted in the interviews was when Lakshmibai is pregnant. Both participants focused on a storyline from the serial possibly as an illustration of the strength of the character. In the storyline, Lakshmibai was pregnant with her first child. Just before she gives birth the palace it is attacked by British soldiers.[xxxvi]

The participants' responses to this narrative suggests that they experience some form of trauma, similarly to the effect of Draupadi's disrobing had on Mankekar's participants. For the two participants it seems like a moment of rupture, where they are ripped out the diegetic world of the serial and brought back to reality as the scene represented their own struggles as Indian diasporic women living in the UK. But on the other hand, it suggests that the emotional realism of the scene gave the two participants an emotional release from which they found a form of cathartic pleasure. It is difficult to be certain as the participants do not discuss these aspects during the interviews with this scene. However, during a discussion of *Udaan*, both Participant 1 and 5 provided some indication as to what effect emotional realism can have. I have already discussed above how Participant 1 sees the character of Chakor as strong. But in this response, she explains how she is affected by cruel acts that are inflicted on the character and how she finds it difficult:

> Participant 1: I don't want to watch it… I don't want to watch it; you know when something bad gonna happen.

Participant 1 implements an avoidance strategy when they know something bad is going to happen to Chakor, Participant 1 ignored an entire episode as she states here:

> I just ignore watching it and I'll miss that episode and I'll find out the next episode to see what happened.

Participant 5, also finds it difficult to watch as mentioned above. Like Participant 1, she also implements an avoidance strategy, whereby she will turn away from the screen, and not look at, the cruelty or punishment that is being inflicted. This implies a bodily or a physical response to such scenes. However, there is still a question of engagement in these situations. The participants, specifically Participant 5, is still engaged with the serial even if they are not looking, as highlighted in the section above. They will continue to hear what is happening in the scene in question if they turn away; and so similarly to the discussion regarding disliked characters above, these scenes also allow different forms of engagement. The scenes also appear to offer another form of engagement, namely ruptured engagement. With this form of engagement viewers are ripped or pulled out of the diegesis during these scenes. This leads to the viewer no longer being engrossed or immersed in the diegesis of the serial world. These moments of ruptured engagement do not necessarily imply that the participant is no longer engaged in the serial. They can still come back to full or partial engagement once the traumatic scene in question has passed. This reengagement with the serials, is suggested by Participant 1's responses, who, skips the entire scenes by fast forwarding through them. This action indicates that in these situations no looking and no engagement is occurring for a short period of time, but they do become reengaged further into the episode or serial.

Another significant aspect to consider are the broader contexts around the production of such a historical serial. It should not simply be taken at face value that this is a straightforward fictionalised biography of a historical queen. Dramatizations of the lives of historical figures as well as mythologies have been re-imagined and re-written to promote an agenda for the Hindu far right. In Chapters 2 and 4 I highlighted how the Hindu right appropriate religious iconography and conventions to promote their ideology. But it is not just religious conventions that are appropriated, history is also re-told in a manner that suits the Hindutva cause. The saffronisation of Indian history has been attempted by organisations associated with the far-right Hindu nationalists since the early 2000s. The neologism refers to attempts and successful implementation of policies made by the Hindu right to re-write history from a positive Hindu perspective. Some of these policies include the re-writing and issuing of school text books to include profiles and speeches from Hindu nationalist leaders from the early part of the 20th century (Banaji, 2018) or as Edwards and Ramamurthy (2017 in Banaji 2018:338) 'suggest the Incredible India branding campaign "frames India as a hybrid nation, open to global capital but

distinctively Hindu in nature"'. Since the late 1980s, Hindu nationalists have presented history in a one-sided, bias way to promote the Hindu nationalist causes such as the *Ram Janmabhumi* movement. Arvind Rajagopal (2001) outlines how visitor would be given leaflets in which they would tell of battles fought and won in the place where Ram was born. 'Described in some detail, with estimate of the thousands of Hindus who had died in the cause over the year, at the hands of Muslim ruler' (Rajagopal, 2001:65). This retelling of history leads to violent clashes towards the people, communities and cultures who are portrayed as other.[xxxvii]

I cannot say for certain what impact, if any, the political underpinning of the serial had on the participants. There is the possibility that because the focus was on this one scene of the serial, and similarly to the findings in Chapter 4, there is a personalised filter through which the participants are interpreting and understanding the serials. It seems that some of the aspects of personhood and experiences do overlap with each other there is a highly personal element through which these participants make meaning from the serials. The clarity towards the understanding of the political undertones of the serial were also overlooked as I did not ask questions around this topic during the interviews.

The highly personalised elements the participants have mentioned in their responses suggest that there is an element of the scene that they recognise. Earlier in the chapter (section 5.3) I highlighted both Mary Ellen Brown (1987) and Ang's (1985) arguments of how recognition of the diegetic world is a key factor for identification and pleasure. Ang (1985) argued that it is crucial for viewers to be able to identify with the world in which the soap opera is set. It is vital for the viewers, so they can get carried away (Ang, 1985). In the study Participant 2 indicates at the end of one of the observation sessions that she likes that she feels part of the family when she watches family-based serials. In the interview, I asked her to expand on the comment and she responds:

> Participant 2 - (I) just imagine that I'm there all the time (laughingly). Like the acting like I'm there sitting there something like… you know you feel something like that.

She expands further later in the interview:

> Participant 2 - I like this… *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* is… it's been going on for so many years but you just get carried away with this drama. So many things happen everyday different story like… So you just get carried away with the drama like that. Like you're part of it all all the time.

Participant 2's first response indicates that she finds herself within the diegesis of the serial – 'I just imagine that I'm there all the time'. This corroborates Piemme's (1975 in Ang, 1985:29) ideas that 'it is impossible to watch a television serial without some degree of personal involvement'. The latter response from the participant, repeatedly uses the phrase 'get carried away', which suggests that she becomes fully immersed in the "drama" and escapes into the diegetic world. But this contradicts Participant 2's response, discussed in more detail below, whereby she highlights how she does not recognise the sets used as homes in the serial. However, despite this she is still able to 'get carried away' and engage with the serials.

Even though the participants watched devotional serials that show magic and what other audiences may regard as superstitious acts, the participants still identify with the practices of worship and devotion that they find enjoyable. Participant 3 states she enjoyed seeing *darshan* being reciprocated and rewarded on screen.

> Participant 3: [in this one about Santoshi Maa they show us that we should have faith/belief in Mataji. If you [*sradhdha*] in the goddess, then all of Santoshi's can get on with her work] right?
>
> Interviewer: What does [*sradhdha*] mean?
>
> Participant 3: [Sradhdha] is like trust…. Now if we say we are in trouble – get into some trouble and we don't know what to do. We turn to God saying 'Hey God can you help me' when that happens […] so straight away the god will help you […] that is how it is.]
>
> Interviewer: So that's what you like?
>
> Participant 3: Yeah that's what I like.

In the response above, Participant 3 refers to the trust a devotee must place in a deity. By referring to the serials and "showing us" the participant implies that the serial is educating viewers about how to be a good devotee and by being so they will be rewarded. It is possible that this response suggested that the participant's own beliefs in God are justified as the serial shows that if you believe and if you trust God you will be rewarded.

This section further highlighted the complexity of pleasure, engagement and looking. The discussion above suggests that Participant 5 appeared to be fully engaged regardless of whether they are presented with positive pleasures as well as negative ones. However, the

scenes with antagonists, or unlikeable characters could provoke ruptured engagement. The possibility of ruptured engagement increased if there was a sense of danger and potential violence in the narrative. These moments are also short lived and can revert to full engagement. The section also reinforced the understanding that being able to recognise elements within the narrative and the characters is a key factor for engagement and looking, particularly full engagement and fully focused looking.

The moments of ruptured engagement could occur regardless of whether the participant is looking at the screen or not. The participant would need to be either looking at the screen either in a full focused or distracted way; or not looking at all but listening. However, in contrast to these forms of engagement, and looking, the findings also highlight momentary no looking, as well as, no engagement occurring when the participant avoids certain scenes or episodes. Again, the findings suggest that the no looking, and no engagement, is short lived and once the scene/episode that is negative or potentially rupturing ends, it appears that full engagement can re-occur. In the next section I further examine recognising the visual aesthetic of the serials and how it may impact engagement and looking.

5.6 Pleasure from visual aesthetics

Above I have already referred to the importance of audiences' having the ability to identify, and recognise, what is seen on screen is relevant for television, as it is through this that TV viewers can gain pleasure. It has been discussed above, the importance of identification of the viewer to the text. Marie Gillespie (1995) also discussed recognition having an impact on a family's enjoyment and pleasure. Gillespie noted how the Dhani family, when they watched Peter Brook's eight-hour play, *The Mahabharata* (1989), did not recognise the visual aesthetics of Brooks' version. They were unfamiliar with each character and led to much confusion. The family were far more familiar with representations of Hindu deities, and the narrative of the Mahabharata through bright chromo-lithographic prints. In addition to the prints they had recently watched the *Ramayan* (1987) and the *Mahabharat* (1989), whose visual aesthetics were borrowed from the prints (Gillespie, 1995:90). Gillespie (1995:89) noted '[t]he international casting and bleak, sackcloth costumes had the immediate effect of rendering their dearly loved gods unrecognisable'. Peter Brook's *Mahabharta* received negative reviews from the family for two main reasons. Firstly, the lack of symbolic and iconographic detail, that is very much associated with the representation of Hindu deities, but also the failure to

distinguish the hierarchy between humans and gods (Gillespie, 1995:90-91). The essence of divinity was not in the drama, and so, the family felt 'the gods were not portrayed with due dignity or respect,' (Gillespie, 1995:91). The Doordarshan version was received positively as the aesthetics conformed to the traditional visual style and the added elements of drama often associated with soap operas. The different production styles can be attributed to the difference in target audiences which, Gillespie acknowledges as, 'Doordarshan's production is aimed at mass popular audiences whilst Brook's is targeted at middle-class theatre-going elites' (Gillespie, 1995:92). The family pinpointed three key events in the narrative where they saw marked differences in the two productions; one key event was the disrobing of Draupadi. The family felt the full force of the scene. They discussed how at first, they felt Draupadi's helplessness and humiliation and then later her rage.

Gillespie, like Ang (1985) and Brown (1987) highlighted how viewers identified with certain characters and their storylines, which I discussed in more detail above; but she also discusses the recognition of visuals as well. Gillespie's participants preferred and took pleasure from watching the *Mahabharat* (1989) rather than Peter Brook's. Similarly, to Gillespie's participants but referring to realist settings and locations, my participants did not recognise the representation of India given to them in the serials. The response below highlights Participant 2's lack of familiarity with the sets in the serials:

> Participant 2: Rich family and big houses and… but I don't see them houses in India, do you? […] Everywhere we go there are only small houses. And people… and I don't know where they stay. But these… shows so big it's just studio I think mainly.

Here the participant highlights that the visuals of India she is shown in the serials is not a reflection of the reality of India she sees when she visits. She also refers to the way the houses are designed. As discussed in chapter 3, the sets used as homes of the families in the serials are often dominated by a large open plan ground floor hall which houses the main living and dining spaces. It is not always made clear where the private spaces of bedrooms and bathrooms are in these homes and it is this that Participant 2 is referring to when she states, "I don't know where they stay".

Again, there is evidence here of the participants' using the text, and their own knowledge, to understand the construction of the serials' visual aesthetic. Participant 2 is intrigued and slightly confused about the construction of the sets but at the same time she understands they

are situated in a studio. However, the confusion or unrecognizability of these sets comes from her own knowledge of India. In other words, Participant 2 does not seem to recognise what has influenced the large houses in the serials when most people in India live in small houses or flats. The implication of the response is contradictory. On the one hand it is comparable to Gillespie's findings above in terms of how visuals of a serial are understood by an audience, namely through their own knowledge; but on the other hand, the inability to recognise the visual aesthetic does not seem to have the same effect on my participant as it does on Gillespie's participants. It could be argued that in Peter Brook's dramatization Gillespie's participants did not recognise any part of the visual aesthetic and therefore stopped watching it. However, in the serials Participant 2 watches there are other parts of the aesthetic, such as the costumes, other sets such as shops or temples, she does recognise as representing the reality of India, therefore allowing Participant 2 to continue watching and engaging with the serial despite questioning the structure of parts of the sets. The response indicates that the participant, momentarily, is negotiating their engagement with serial but as part of their full and/or partial engagement. This continues to further emphasise the fluidity of different forms of engagement.

The response in this section on the one hand is similar to the findings from Gillespie's (1995) study but unlike her participant, my findings suggest that the participant is still fully engaged with the serial. The participant only highlighted one element (the family homes) of the mise-en-scene she did not recognise, as opposed to Gillespie's participants who could not recognise the entire visual style of Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*. My participant can still recognise other aspects of the visual style thus allowing full engagement to occur. Further to this the findings highlight the participants' analytical understanding of television production, thus again indicating their negotiated engagement with the serial.

5.7 Pleasure from handsome characters

The sections above have highlighted that the participants are able to verbalise what aspects of the serials gives them pleasure. But these pleasures are not referring to sexual pleasure or desire from the serials. Hazel Collie found that her participants have difficulty verbalising concepts of women's desire (Collie, 2017:226). Collie reasoned that her participants were having difficulty in talking about desire, especially physical desire, because they had difficulty seeing themselves as both mothers and desiring women at the same time (Collie, 2017:227). Collie's participants were all white, aged between 42 and 95. Collie also found her participants

talked about their favourite characters in 'particular men were identified as being desirable due to displaying character traits, such as kindness, or competencies, such as particular talent for acting. When framed in this way, desire could be justified as something other than physical and sexual' (Collie, 2017:226).

Further to Collie's ideas, discussed above, I want to add extra context to the discussions of love, and desire, which are relevant to this thesis. This context of love and desire stems from an Indian Hindu perspective which is more appropriate for my participants. Rachel Dwyer (2000) highlights that examining ideas of erotic love and desire within an Indian context has severe limitations (Dwyer, 2000:8). What is more common are other forms of love such as familial love, which as Dwyer states, 'are often regarded more highly and are often integral to erotic and romantic relationships' (Dwyer, 2000:8). Dwyer also highlights that most of the ideas of romantic and erotic love in India have largely been dictated by upper caste Hindu men, therefore it is very one sided; but these ideas are well known throughout Indian society (Dwyer, 2000). Dwyer focuses on ideas of love in India, which followed the diaspora to the UK. However, Marie Gillespie examines what influence British and American norms and ideas of love had on her participants who were young people amongst the South Asian diaspora. 'The perceived permissiveness and moral laxness of 'western' values with regards to gender relations and sexual relationships are felt by many parents to be extremely threatening' (Gillespie, 1995:154). Gillespie found her young participants understood the complex cultural ideas of love, marriage and courtship, for example 'fifty-eight percent of young people surveyed agreed with the statement that 'dating is normal at my age'; whilst 40 percent agreed that 'It's not normal in my culture and I respect that' (Gillespie, 1995:172).

During the interviews, I asked the participants if they thought any characters in the serials were handsome or good looking. Five participants named characters from generic Hindi serials, mostly from family-based serials Participant 1 consider Dharamraj from the serial *Bandini* (*Captured Woman*, 2009 -2011, Imagine) to be handsome. Dharamraj is the main protagonist of the serial, a rich diamond merchant whose second marriage is to Santu the female protagonist. Participant 2 considered Mantu from *Tere Sheher Mein (In Your City*, (2015, Star Plus*)* as handsome. Participant 4 considered Nahar from *Saloni Saat Phera* (*Seven Rounds*, 2005 – 2009, ZEE TV) to be handsome. The serial is no longer being broadcast as it was originally broadcast on ZEE TV between 2005 and 2009. But the actor who played Nahar has moved on to take the lead role in a new crime-based serial called *Agent Raghav – Crime*

Branch (2015 -2016, &TV), which the participant seems to have watched on occasion, possibly because of the actor. Participant 5 could not think of a character straight away but then remembers the teacher in the serial *Udaan* as being handsome. She cannot remember the name of the character (Arjun Khanna) but remembers the role he played as the physical education teacher to the main young female protagonist Chakor. Participant 6 spoke of Ahem and his brother, Jigar from serial *Saath Nibhaana Saathiya* (*Stay Together, My Love*, 2010 – 2017). As she talks about the two characters her references to them are mostly about their personalities rather than their looks. She describes them as being understanding, thoughtful and they do not fight.

From these responses, we can begin to see that it is mostly the main male protagonist in family-based serials the participants consider to be handsome. The responses above, highlight the participants using 'non-physical terms' to describe the male characters they considered to be handsome. Similarly, to how Collie's participants described characters they liked by describing character traits, the responses from my participants also suggest that the cultural constraints within which the participants live has played a role in their suggestions. Collie also found that some of her participants were not happy to talk about desire in relation to watching television. For Collie, it was women in their 80s/90s who were not happy, while for my research it was my oldest participant who was in her 70s. Collie (2017:227) also found that some of her participants in their 60s and 70s extended their mothering towards her which I also found happening to me during my research. As I stated in the introduction and in Chapter 3, I have been part of the community since birth and these women had known me for a very long time. This also hindered some of the discussion around who the participants thought of as handsome.

Similarly, to Collie, I also found my participants reluctant to talk about why they found these characters handsome, in particular Participant 3, who avoided answering the questions by either switching her attention to the television or just going quiet. This in turn led to some discomfort being felt on both sides and leads me to think how even if the participants think a character is handsome or good-looking, voicing that opinion is still considered taboo by some. Participant 3 acknowledges that the characters are all actors,

> Those people are acting and they make the serial right?
> That's it because they are the parts they have.

This response suggests that the participant is aware that the characters in the serials are all being played by actors. They are simply playing a role, the implication being that all the viewer sees is a performance rather than the real person. The response can also be viewed as the participant wanting to create distance from the characters being critically analysing the male protagonists in the serials are simply roles played by actors. The reason for this distance may stem from awkwardness the participant felt when asked about whether they thought a character was handsome. This distance can also be seen in the responses of other participants, namely Participant 1, who kept referring to the characters acting as the trait they liked the most.

This critical understanding and discussion of acting could also stem from the inability to express or talk about desire. What I mean by this, is that, either they possibly do not have the vocabulary, or, are too shy to use the vocabulary they do know. Even though within some Indian Hindu contexts erotic love is considered taboo and focus is more on familial love, the participants have lived in the U.K. for nearly four decades. Therefore, as I mentioned in the introduction to the thesis and I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 6, they have been watching television from elsewhere, namely English language programming from the U.K. and USA. Television programmes that do provide women with the vocabulary to articulate their desire. So this leads me to consider that the participants, firstly that the participants are like Collie's participants, in that they potentially do not see themselves as desirable women and mothers; and that they are unsure how to use the vocabulary they may know from English language programmes in an context when referring to Indian Hindi language serials. Thus, this leads them to revert to knowledge around love from the high caste male perspective highlighted through Dwyer.

The findings in this section highlighted how the participants perceive handsome characters in the serials. It suggested that pleasure for these participants stems largely from handsome characters who have good personality traits, in a similar vain to how the participant described the characters they liked earlier in the chapter. This similarity suggests the participants engage and look at handsome characters in the same way as they look at and engage with liked characters. Which, as I highlighted above, is that they are fully engaged, and they allow fully focused looking to occur. The ways in which the participants engage and look at handsome characters is further emphasised but the role of the handsome male characters' in the narrative, particularly in their narrative relation to the female characters in the serials. The

findings also highlight the participants inhibition to talk about the characters and any desire they may feel, as they described them through their non-physical attributes. Also, the lack of knowledge of how to talk about handsome characters makes it difficult to decipher if other ways of looking or other forms of engagement were occurring. The findings strongly suggest that for the participants pleasure comes more from their engagement in the narrative and seeing how male characters help and generally act towards female characters; as opposed to looking at the male characters. Again, there is an emphasis here on engagement as opposed to looking.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored different aspects of the serials which bring pleasure to the participants. The different aspects examined included the characters, the narratives, and recognition of the visual aesthetics of the serials. I further argued that for these participants, pleasure, engagement and looking is complex and fluid.

The findings highlighted that when the participants like the narrative of the serial they can be fully or partially engaged with it. There is some negotiated engagement as well. This suggests that the participants are either looking at the screen in a full focused or distracted way. However, the frustration at the nonsensical and repetitive nature of some narratives, that some participants referred to as "*buckwas*" can lead to other forms of engagement and ways of looking. The discussion in the chapter implied that there is no engagement, negotiated engagement and possibly partial engagement occurring. This then suggests that there is no looking or distracted looking occurring. These ways of looking and forms of engagement were emphasised verbally through the use of *buckwas* and some of the participants highlighting serials that continue past their best.

The responses highlighted that pleasure can be positive, when good events happen to characters they like or consider handsome. This can lead to full or partial engagement as well as suggesting fully and distracted looking. However negative, upsetting, and sad events happening to characters they like can lead to ruptured engagement and negotiated engagement. The participants would need to be either partially or fully engaged prior to the unfortunate event occurring for ruptured engaged to occur. The implication is that the participants would not looking when the traumatic scenes may be screened. Similar ruptured

engagement, and some negotiated engagement occurred when the participants did not recognise or relate to the visuals of a serial.

Another interesting finding in the chapter was how the participants see characters in various ways, such as role models or as reflections of themselves. These characters were defined through their personality traits and their deeds in the narratives. Handsome male characters were described in the same way. The pleasure/pain response or the negative emotional pleasure was also narratively driven. These discussions around the characters further highlight the participants negotiated engagement also emerged as there was often slippage between talking about character as a real person as opposed to an actor playing a role. The findings illustrated further the complex intersections between engagement and looking. It is layered and fluid form of engagement that can be full and negotiated at the same time as understood by Kaur. This suggests that the two do not exclude each other as often thought in television studies. The findings also indicate that this multi-layered form of engagement can also lead to different ways of looking that are also fluid. Some of the ways in which the participants engage with the serial can include full engagement through looking or by listening or both.

While this chapter and the previous chapter examined the impact of the texts themselves on different ways of looking, Chapters 6 moves outwards, away from the text to examine television flow, the participants' history of watching television and technology on different ways of looking.

Chapter 6: Flow, History and Technology

6. 1 Introduction

This chapter and the next examine how the technology of television, history of television consumption and physical space may impact engagement and looking. The focus of this chapter is to explore how television flow, the viewer's history of television consumption and technology can have an impact on a television viewer's engagement and looking. I suggest that exposure to a different television flow alongside the kind of television a viewer is used to watching can provoke different forms of engagement, such as partial engagement, negotiated engagement or no engagement. This in turn can impact to what extent the viewer is looking at the screen, allowing no looking or distracted looking to occur. I also suggest that the ability to create personalised flows and the use of other technological devices can also lead to the same forms of engagement and looking as those mentioned above but also full engagement and fully focused looking. The previous two chapters explored how the texts themselves may influence different forms of engagement and different ways of looking.

In the first section, I give a brief overview of the history of television in India. The section also discusses the impact and influence that global, particularly American; television has had on contemporary Indian television. In the second section, I examine the concept of flow as defined by Raymond Williams (1974) and how it may influence different ways of looking and different forms of engagement. In the third section, I examine the history of my participants' television consumption. In the fourth section, I examine the use of television technology, including time-shifting technology and how participants avoid watching advertisements. In the final section, I examine the use of other technological devices, like smart phones and tablets, by the participants.

6.2 Flow

Raymond Williams (1974) introduced the concept of flow to television studies. The concept referred to how television schedules changed from television programmes being single and standalone segments to the programmes becoming a seamless flow with advertisements, trailers and idents. Initially, between one programme ending and another beginning, there was essentially an interval, which Williams states as 'true intervals, usually marked by some conventional sound or picture to show that the general service was still active' (Williams, 1974: 89-90). What changed was instead of having this interval of no sound or picture between the programmes, television now became an endless flow of sound images. The change occurred

after the arrival of commercial television when the interval was replaced by adverts (Williams, 1974:90). The notion of the 'interruption' on British and American commercial television became what Williams refers to as planned flow. Williams argues that commercial television now is not just the programme you see listed in a TV guide but a continuous flow of programme – adverts – programme – that flow into each other (Williams, 1974:90). Williams's discusses a trip to America, there was a noticeable change to television flow. Audiences get used to the television flow they are exposed to. However, when the flow changes (because it changes from country to country) it becomes noticeable. Therefore, based on who you are, where you are watching television the flow can be noticeable. Mimi White takes the idea of flow beyond geographical boundaries and argues that because the term flow comes up in many contexts related to travelling and tourism, there is a link between flow, television and the changing nature of watching television depending on where you are (White, 2003:99). This awareness of television flow can be noticed in different ways which Hamid Naficy (1993) addresses in terms of diasporic audiences.

The discussion below concentrates on the concept of flow in terms of traditional linear television, but I want to highlight here that there has been a recent re-examination of the idea in relation to new developments in television technology. Scholars such as, Evans (2011), Frolova (2017), Johnson (2013) and Oswald & Packer (2012) have questioned whether the concept of flow is still relevant, especially since television is no longer constructed in a linear fashion. Live television can now be stopped or paused as well as rewound by viewers, thus allowing viewers to create their own flow. Digital technology has also allowed viewers to view television content when and wherever they want to, thus not restricting viewers to a television set. These aspects of television technological development I discuss later in the chapter and in Chapter 7.

Diasporic audiences are familiar with multiple forms of flow. Naficy discusses two additional kinds of flow an Iranian community in Los Angelesknow of in addition to the mainstream flow. First, Naficy describes the exilic flow; which he uses to refer to the Iranian television programmes this community watch. These programmes are made by producers who were also exiled Iranians in the United States. Naficy notes that the way in which these programmes were sequenced and put together could be described as exilic flow. 'Exilic television programmes are usually broadcast by television stations not as single entities but in clusters, forming an exilic flow' (Naficy, 1993: 93).

The second form of flow Naficy refers to is ethnic flow. Naficy uses ethnic flow to describe the range of different language programmes that are available and are aimed at different communities.

> This conception of a multilingual nested ethnic televisual flow is radically different from the monolingual, monochannel, monocultural flow television scholars have formulated and studied. What is more, this ethnic flow is not insular. […] exile television programs, therefore, are consumed within a triple-tiered viewer-strip selected by the audience. Exilic and ethnic viewers can travel across these nested flows (exilic, ethnic, and mainstream) because they are generally familiar with more than one language. For a majority of the monolingual viewers, however, the exile and ethnic flows remain generally unreadable (Naficy, 1993: 94).

Naficy acknowledges that the Iranian population in LA is diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion and language, therefore, when they watch television, the Iranian diaspora is familiar with multiple forms of flow which can be a combination of exilic, ethnic and mainstream. Knowledge of the multiple forms of flow comes from the exposure to the different flows because of the wide range of television that is available to them. As my findings reveal, a multiplicity of flows is also available to my participants; Naficy's concepts are thus useful in understanding how my participants comprehend television flows.

During the interviews, I asked the participants if they watched television while growing up or if they had a television set when they were younger. My findings revealed that for five out of the six the participants, did not have a television set when they were young, nor had they watched television prior to arriving in the UK. Television was first experienced after they arrived in the UK between the late 1960s and the early 1980s. In the next section I discuss in more detail just what kind of television the participants watched during this time. Participant 5 was the only participant to have had a television while growing up in India. Her parents brought a television when she was a teenager, and they were living in Mumbai. Participants 4 and 5 remembered going to the cinema whilst they were growing up. Participant 4 seemed to go more often:

> Participant 4 – We didn't have a TV in India. No. So we went to cinema. We go to cinema. Might be once a week or sometime.
>
> Interviewer – Who would you go to the cinema with?
>
> Participant 4 – Friends, family, sister.

> Interviewer – What did you watch? Do you remember? What kind of films?
>
> Participant 4 – Hindi film, religious film, Gujarati films, all sorts. Like drama, it's like love story."

Participant 5 remembered, she was taken by her father with the rest of the family to watch films, but only on special occasions. This experience of watching films in auditoriums in India can potentially build the participants knowledge of a specific visual and aural style. Particularly for Participant 5 who, as I discuss in more detail in the next section, watched Hindi films on Doordarshan and other programmes relating to the films.

It could be argued that British television did create a version of ethnic flow within their schedules, an aspect later developed by Channel 4 as discussed in the Introduction. The BBC broadcast a weekly Hindi language magazine and advice programme called *Apna Hi Ghar Samajhiye* (*Make Yourself at Home*) (Hundel, 2009). This programme was scheduled to air at a time outside the normal BBC schedule, which was a weekend morning. Therefore, it could be argued on the one hand that this programme created its own sequence of ethnic flow, but on the other hand, it largely fell into the flow of BBC television. The programme was also made by the BBC and therefore cannot be considered exilic flow because the South Asian diaspora was not exiled, nor did they produce the programmes independently.

The discussion of television flows above highlights the various, but limited, kinds of flow the participants have been exposed to. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 have predominately been exposed to British television flow, both commercial and public service broadcasting flow. Participant 5 has also been exposed to these flows but also the flow of public service television of India. At the time Participant 5 was watching television in India, there was some advertising on the channel, but they were largely stills being placed between programmes. Also, Doordarshan was not constantly broadcasting.[xxxviii] When the programmes were not being aired on Doordarshan, there was no picture/image. Therefore, it was an intermittent form of television unlike the continual flow of British terrestrial television. The flow of contemporary Indian channels such as Star Plus or Colors as changed a great deal. The flow of these channels can be described as being very similar to American commercial television flow as described in the section above. The channels broadcast content continually for 24 hours a day and each episode of the programmes consist of numerous advert breaks. The participants have only been exposed to the flow of transnational television channels from India for a fraction of the

time they were exposed to British television flows (commercial and public service broadcasting). Based on this discussion I suggest that television flow can have an impact on their engagement and looking. The exposure to different but limited kinds of flow implies it can allow partial and negotiated engagement to occur as well as potentially distracted looking and no looking to occur. These suggestions are built on in the next section where I examine the participants' history of television viewing.

6.4 The History of Watching Television

The previous section established that most of my participants had not watched television prior to arriving in the UK. In this section, I turn to the discussion of what kind of programmes the participants did watch once arriving in the UK. Alexander Dhoest (2016:67) states that 'first-hand qualitative accounts of audience experience were rarely collected in the early years of broadcasting, audience memories constitute one of the few ways to reconstruct such experiences'. I take this further and argue that memories of a South Asian diasporic audience are a way to understand the diasporic experience and where television (or any media) may fit into this experience.

Tim O'Sullivan (1991) uses interviews to examine the memories of early British television audiences. The research aims to re-establish what the culture of watching television was in the 1950s. Through his interviews, O'Sullivan finds his participants have a strong memory of when they first watched television, but he acknowledges that these memories were 'sentimentalised and fragmented' (O' Sullivan, 1991:163). In other words, his participants were comparing the television they watched in the 1950s to the television they were watching at the time the interviews when the research was conducted. The participants had sentimentalised the television of the 1950 and had become nostalgic for the television of yesteryear. O'Sullivan also found that most of his participants talked about the programmes that were on television as opposed to the actual television set.

Some of my participants memories of watching television for the first time are similar to those found by O'Sullivan above. In this discussion, Participant 5 remembers some of her first experiences of watching television while living in India.

> Interviewer - When you were younger, when you were small, did you watch television?
>
> Participant 5 – Yeah

Interviewer - What kind of television?

Participant 5 - Mainly in India cinema (films) came on TV more often. So we watched them the most.

Interviewer - Do you remember the first time you saw television?

Participant 5 - you know we used to live in Mumbai and where my dad worked in that area, we were the first house to have a TV.

Interviewer - so err.. so when you were younger.. So errm.. What kind of programmes use to be on? Do you remember? There was the cricket for the men. {Pt 5 - Yeah} But what did your parents?

Participant 5 - oh I don't know any serials. I don't know which ones I used to watch. But I used to watch cinema (films) on Saturdays and Sundays.

Interviewer - Films on Saturdays and Sundays ok.

Participant 5 - And in Mumbai like we were going other people's houses and going to school. So on Saturdays and Sundays when the films were coming on we would get excited. 'This film is going to come on and we will watch it' like.

Interviewer - Ok. So it was more film for you

Participant 5 - Yeah more film. Cinema.. serial I don't remember much. Oh cinema (film) songs used to come on *Chaya Chitra* that was on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We really used to like that the songs…We used to like it a lot.

Interviewer - ok like you and your brothers and sisters

Participant 5 - yeah {Interviewer - like the kids who used to watch it} yeah. My mum didn't watch much TV and she didn't really like it. Yeah but we used to really like it.

Participant 5's experience of watching television indicates fond memories of watching films and programmes presenting clips of songs from films. Perhaps she enjoyed this more because her family was the first to have a television set in the neighbourhood in Mumbai. There is a suggestion that they were fond memories because it highlights status among the neighbourhood but also the social nature of watching television with others, including people from the neighbourhood. Watching television, particularly films, on the weekend seemed to be

a key memory. This response also reiterates my earlier discussion of the kinds of programming broadcast Indian television in the 1970s. However, these memories were fragmented and could be tainted by remembering incorrectly (O'Sullivan 1991:163). There were similar themes of misremembering and nostalgia in the responses from Participant 2 who talked about watching television with her family in Leicester, which I discuss in more detail below.
Unlike O'Sullivan's participants, the responses from my participants differ in that some of the conversations about television began with a brief discussion of the actual apparatus and the access they had to the set. It is through this discussion that I then asked what kind of programmes the participants watched on British television. Most named quiz shows but in this exchange with Participant 1, you can see how they were also watching programmes with lots of action and fighting.

> Participant 1 – Oh like you know *these Hawaii five-o… [then] – Avengers, Simon Templar*… we didn't watch any comedy because we didn't understand English much [you see ...In the other programmes there was a lot of fighting and stuff used to come on]
>
> Interviewer – yeah so just the action
>
> Participant 1 – [yes] the action … we liked… [and] Boxing, [back then a lot of boxing used to be on] wrestling…. American wrestling… we watched that… (slight pause) [and] entertainment programmes, you know like, [that] Bruce Forsyth's game…*Generation game* [and then] and [and then that] (pause) *Family Fortunes*.

Coming from India and East African countries the participants did not have a full grasp of English. Therefore, the programmes they preferred watching after they first arrived in the UK did not require them to understand English to a high level. The exchange above also highlights family-based entertainment programmes like *The Generation Game* (1971 – 1982 original run) and *Family Fortunes* (1980 – 2004 original run, ITV) as being programmes regularly watched by the participants and their families. It is not possible to say for certain why these programmes were named. But it is probable that these programmes were named by the participants they were easy to follow entertainment programmes that focused on families as contestants. Many families only owned one television and often watched television together and these programmes catered for all audiences, young and old. Also, these programmes were very popular with the general television viewing public suggesting that the participants were engaged in the same television viewing culture as the rest of the population. Only Participant 4

mentioned how once a week there was a programme on aimed at the South Asian community. In this response, she also recalls her watching an Indian film during her first Christmas in the UK:

> Participant 4 – [when we arrived here, back then it was all English. Gujarati Hindi there was nothing. Our programme that did come on it was barely once on a Sunday]. I think on a Sunday [in the morning] … and [film at Christmas] first time Christmas time [it came on].

Participant 4 refers to the programmes as 'our' programmes thereby taking ownership of the programmes that were aimed at the South Asian diaspora. This ownership suggests that she saw the programmes as only for the diaspora. In the same sentence, the participant also refers to the number of times the programmes were broadcast. The fact that she mentioned that it was 'barely once on a Sunday' seems to indicate that it was not a regular programme broadcast every week, rather it was broadcast sporadically depending on the week.

Participant 2 nostalgically remembers watching Indian films on video tapes while growing up.

> Participant 2 -We used to watch lots of movies in Leicester. Rent – you know rented… Yeah yeah we used to like sit and watch. Everybody sitting on the floor on mattresses and watching Indian films. Yeah I remember my brother all sitting down and bringing crisps and chocolates and drinks and sitting and watching.

Participant 2 here describes how her family spent their leisure time, mainly on weekends. She describes the scene in the living room as an event for the whole family to enjoy. This memory reinforces the findings of a study conducted by Marie Gillespie (1989) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. She found that many South Asian families in Southall had brought a VCR and spent their leisure times watching Indian films on rented tapes over the weekend. Interestingly, none of the other participants talked about watching Indian films or television programmes on videos. In my questioning, I did not specifically mention access to films and video cassettes. This could be a reason that led to limited responses on this topic from the other participants. This in turn led to limited responses from the participants. Even so, Participant 2's response implies that, her family at least, were either supplementing Indian language film and programmes that were broadcast on terrestrial British television through videos or the videos were their only source of access to Indian language film and television programmes.

As discussed earlier, Participant 5 mostly remembers watching the films broadcast on weekends but on Saturday afternoons: however, she also mentions that if the cricket was on her fathers' friends came over to watch it and she was not allowed into the room. These memories are very much in line with the kind of programming on Doordarshan in the 1970s. Participant 5's acknowledgement of not being able to watch television while her father and his friends watched cricket leads me to notice limitations other participants faced in terms of their television viewing. One such limitation was mentioned by Participant 2 who used to watch television with her family (parents and siblings) but if a kissing scene came on screen, her father told her to look away. Participant 1 also discusses how the family with which they were living when they first arrived in Preston did not allow her and her siblings to watch television. She talks about how she and her siblings secretly watched through the gap in the door. However as soon as they moved out of the hosts' family home and into their own, Participant 1's father bought a second-hand television for their home. O'Sullivan (1991:167) acknowledges 'the activity of watching the television was clearly negotiated and governed in a variety of ways by pre-existing sets of domestic codes' and this is evidenced in the recollection of some of my participants.

These responses highlight how early viewing practices were negotiated through domestic codes and how they changed depending on the circumstances. Marie Gillespie provides further insight by stating that elders would censure the watching of *Neighbours* for her participants (Gillespie, 1995). For Participants 2 and 5 it was their fathers who partially controlled and censored what they watched. While Participant 1's early viewing practices were heavily censored by the host family but once they moved to their own home, they were free from this external censorship.

The participants do state, that in addition to the action/crime shows and game shows, they used to watch British, Australian and American soap operas as well.

> Participant 1 - *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders*.
>
> Participant 2 - Used to watch *Dallas* that used to come on.
>
> Participant 3 - Oh yeah *Dallas*. Yeah I used to watch that.
>
> Participant 4 - I used to watch soap *Coronation Street.* So since I came I watching *Coronation Street*.
>
> Participant 5 - I used to watch *EastEnders* but once I got Sky I stopped.

Participant 6 - *Neighbours* and like…a… *Dallas*.

As there were only three channels available until 1982, these responses were to be expected. The responses reiterate my assertation in the introduction to the thesis, that highlighted that the participants were watching the same programmes as those audiences who were the focus of studies in the 1980s (Morley, 1980 and 1986; Hobson, 1982). The responses begin to indicate how, on the one hand the group of women in the study are similar in many ways, but then on the other hand there are also many differences between them. A couple of differences are highlighted here, firstly only one participant recalled watching *Neighbours,* and I suggest that this is because it was broadcast earlier in the evening than the other soap operas, normally at 5.30pm on BBC 1. This may have been a time when other participants may have been at work or preparing the evening meal and therefore unable to watch this particular soap opera. Secondly Participant 4 here refers to watching *Coronation Street* in the past tense. However, during the observations (discussed in more detail in chapter 6) she does acknowledge that every so often she will continue to watch the soap unlike many of the other participants. Their recollections here mention Participant 1 also remembers watching some American soap operas like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* (1981 – 1989) and how she began watching *Peyton Place* (1964 – 1969, ABC) because her sister started watching it. This suggested that the participant only had one television set and everybody in the household watched the same programme. Participant 5's response indicates a clear break away from watching British soap operas once she had a subscription to Sky. This implies that once Sky was installed the participant switched to mostly, if not all, Indian language programming. This re-emphasises that for a long time there was a need for more Indian language programming. As highlighted in the introduction as well as in Chapter 3, British terrestrial television programming did not fully serve the needs of this specific audience very well. Participant 4's response above further underscores the limited availability of programming, when she referred to programmes only being broadcast on a weekly basis and sometimes not even that often.

Overall, from these responses, the participants' history and experience of watching television can be identified. For most of the participants it was their arrival in the UK that first gave them access to television. The findings indicated that, just like many television viewers at the time, they watched many of the popular programmes which included quiz shows and soap operas. The responses also highlight the participants knowledge and familiarity with British, American and Australian soap operas. There is an implication that these histories can influence the

participants' engagement and looking to allow partial engagement and distracted looking. These findings can also be examined with the responses about nonsensical narratives, discussed in Chapter 4 and the discussion of television flow above. A combination of the findings from these different factors (nonsensical narrative, flow and history of television viewing) provide evidence that the participants appear to be partially engaged and distracted looking is occurring. In addition to these findings the responses also indicated that on occasion some of the participants' television viewing practices were controlled and limited in terms of domestic codes. These negotiated viewing practices largely occurred when the participants were young and still living with their parents and siblings or in large households. It is difficult to establish what impact, if any, these negotiated and controlled practices had on the participant engagement and looking towards television. The responses also began to highlight the use of videos to watch Indian language films and television programmes but the responses in this area are limited and again the impact of this practice is difficult to decipher here. However, in the next section I examine further the use of television technology including time shifting technology which may provide further insight into the impact of technology on forms of engagement and different ways of looking.

6.5 Channel hopping, time shifting technology and advertising avoidance

Time-shifting technology has advanced a great deal with viewers now being able to record, pause and stop live television. However, time shifting television programmes is not a new concept, the VCR has been used for decades before TiVo and Sky+. Previous studies that have examined the use of the VCR in the home mostly focus on the idea that it is a piece of technology and therefore not necessarily used by women (Gray, 1992). In his interviews with families, Morley (1986:158) found that none of the women he interviewed used the video recorder to 'any great extent, relying on husband or children to work it for them'. In other words, they only really used them when other people were there to work the VCR for them. Morley does acknowledge that daughters in the families did use the VCR, but the mothers tended not to. He argues that the reason for this is the cultural connotations placed on the technology 'Videos like automatic control panels, are the possessions of fathers and sons (and occasionally teenage daughters whose education had made them more confident with machinery than their mothers)' (Morley, 1986:158).

In a study of South Asian families, Marie Gillespie (1989) explores their use of VCRs in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Gillespie finds that many South Asian families were 'quick to seize the opportunity to extend their choice and control over viewing in the home' (1989:227). In other words, South Asian families quickly bought VCRs when they became more affordable. This was so the families themselves could control when they watched Indian films and later Indian television programmes as opposed to relying on them being broadcast on terrestrial television. In the study Gillespie focused on how the family used the VCR, describing how it is mainly used on the weekends to spend leisure time (Gillespie, 1989). The study did not examine how, or even if, the women in these families used the VCR. However, the idea that the families were taking control of what and when they watched is important here.

Since Morley, Gray and Gillespie conducted their studies over 30 years ago, developments in television technologies have changed viewing habits. Subscriptions to Sky+ and TiVo have allowed viewers to take even more control of when, where and what they watch. Smart televisions, connected to the internet allow viewers to access television content from all over the world, in some cases without a subscription. Ksenia Frolova's (2017) study of parents and their television viewing habits found that with new television technologies it has become easier for parents to take control of their television viewing schedule. Frolova's findings acknowledged that due to family schedules the parents were not able to watch television as it was being broadcast. Instead, they watched the programme after the broadcast date because they had recorded them or through catch up websites.

During the observations, none of my participants used catch-up websites. However, I noted that some participants channel hopped at certain times while others did not at all. I also observed participants record serials to watch at more convenient times. The participants who channel hopped were Participants 3 and 4. This mostly happened when the serial they were watching went to advert breaks. Participant 4 explains to me that when the advert breaks come on, she flicks through channels:

> Participant 4 – [So see how there is a part on?... [So] I just flick around every single one, where there is coming.

Participant 4 flicked through the transnational free channels she had access to but also occasionally turned to ITV1 to catch up with *Coronation Street*. She only switched to ITV1 when she knew *Coronation Street* was being broadcast. At other times, she flicked between the Indian channels; this included the channels broadcasting serials and films. Participant 3 flicked

to channels she knew, for example while we were watching *Santoshi Maa* on &TV she switched over to Star Plus that was broadcasting *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* or vice versa. Both participants wanted to catch another serial before that too went to an advert break as well.

Participants 2, 5 and 6 did not channel hop at all and remained watching the same channel throughout the observation sessions. Participant 5 told me she did not like to channel hop because it "becomes too much." The implication is that the wealth of choice of channels and number of programmes can be overwhelming to keep up with. Therefore, she keeps to one channel and the serials on that channel, in this case, Colors. Participant 2 and 6 preferred to watch serials on Star Plus. Participant 6 did not state during the observation why she preferred these serials, but Participant 2 did say that she thought they were better. Unfortunately, the participant does not qualify this response by specifying what she thought the serials on Star Plus were better.

Participant 1 recorded her serials on her Sky+ box while they were being broadcast in the early evening. The serials she recorded were from a few different channels, namely Rishtey, Star Plus and Colors. During the first observation session, before turning to the recorded serials, Participant 1 flicked through the digital Indian channels and stopped to watch a film that was being broadcast. The film was called *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (*There May or May Not be a Tomorrow*, 2013, dir. Nikhil Advani) and Participant 1 watched for about 15 - 20 minutes. It was only when the film went to an advert break did Participant 1 turn to the recorded serials and began watching *Uttaran* (*Second-Hand,* 2008 – 2015, Colors).

Television technology has given viewers the ability to create their own flow. These responses and my observations begin to highlight how the participants are creating their own flows this gives the participants the opportunity to maintain specific forms of engagement and ways of looking. For example, Participant 1 can maintain fully focused looking because she is watching the programmes at a time suitable for her, thus allowing her to be fully engaged in the serials as well. Other participants (2 and 3) did have the facilities to pause the live broadcast as they went out of the room, but they did not use it, thus allowing moments of no looking and no engagement to occur. It appears that these moments of no looking and no engagement lasted for the duration the participants left the room. On their return other forms of engagement and different ways of looking could occur such as partial engagement and distracted looking as well as full engagement and fully focused looking. The channel hopping can be an indication of

several different ways of looking but implies partial engagement. There is a suggestion that this partial engagement occurs when the advert breaks begin leading to channel hopping. It also suggests that the participants who channel hop to find another serial that has not had an advert break can be a way for them to maintain fully focused looking and full engagement. The impact of the number of advert breaks on engagement and looking are discussed in more detail in the next section.

6.5.1 Advertising Avoidance

Glick and Levy (1962/2005) argue that even if a viewer states they do not watch adverts they will still be aware of and have knowledge of television adverts. Studies have revealed that viewers avoid adverts by 'cognitive, behavioural, and mechanical means' (Speck and Elliott, 1997:61). For example, to avoid watching adverts, Peter Danaher (1995) found viewers can leave the room (behavioural), switch over to other channels or switch the set off (mechanical), or ignore the adverts or engage in a conversation with other people (cognitive). Kenneth Wilbur (2008) found four basic motivations as to why audiences avoid advertising. The first motivation is that audiences avoid adverts if they have other activities to do like have a conversation. The second motivation is that viewers avoid adverts if they are not visually attractive. The third motivation concerned viewers becoming "worn out" by seeing the same advert and finally the fourth motivation for viewers to avoid adverts is when they do not want the product or service that is being advertised (Wilbur, 2008:144).

In the first section of this chapter, I highlighted the manner in which an episode of prime-time Hindi serials is broadcast in three parts. After the first part of the serial there is an advert break for five minutes after which there is the second part of the serial lasting five to seven minutes. This is followed by a second advertisement break lasting two to three minutes and then the final part of the serial lasting four to five minutes. The advert breaks between the end of the previous programme and the start of the next are very short – possibly only a trailer for another show before the sponsors of the next serial begin. This excessive use of advert breaks was commented on by Participants 3, 4 and 6 during the observations.

Participant 3 commented early in the observations about how adverts are on more than the serial itself. Later in the observation when another advert break came on her annoyance increased and she estimated that the serials are only about 15 - 20 minutes in length and the rest of the half hour slot is taken up with advert breaks. Participant 3 was clearly frustrated at

the amount of advert breaks. During the advert breaks Participant 3 picked up the remote control and turned the volume down if she had turned it up during the serial. She also flicked to other channels to see if other serials had cut to their advert breaks as well. If they had not she watched the remainder of the serial until they too cut to the advert break.

The frustration with the amount of advert breaks during a serial or the length of the advert breaks was also present in my conversation with Participant 4. In the first observation session the serial cut to an advert break, Participant 4 picked up the remote control and as she did so, she complained about how the advert breaks are 5- 10 minutes long. In a similar vein to Participant 3, Participant 4 also channel hopped during the advert breaks. Participant 6, although annoyed that there are so many advert breaks, used them as breaks in watching the serials to complete her work - namely sewing.

It seems participants implement different strategies to cope with the advert breaks which do have an impact on engagement and looking. For example, by recording the serials Participant 1 can fast forward through the advert breaks – a strategy to keep the focus on the serials. As I stated above, it appears the participant can maintain fully focused looking through this avoidance strategy. Participants 3 and 4 channel hop to other channels to catch up on other serials. This allows for two different looks, distracted looking, or fully focused looking. Participant 3 also used the advert breaks to either start a new conversation or continue a conversation we had started but had not finished. It was at these moments Participant 3 and I had conversations about general topics, but there was little to no conversation while the serial was being broadcast. This suggests the participant is fully engaged with the serial but during the advert breaks this engagement is lessened to perhaps partial engagement or no engagement thus allowing conversations and other activities to take place, an area of further discussion in Chapter 6. Their annoyance and frustrations at the number of advert breaks builds on the suggestions made above, that the participants are partially engaged and negotiated engagement, possibly due to their experiences of watching British public service broadcasting television and commercial television; which consists of no or far less breaks.

6.6 Using other devices

In this section, I will discuss if the use of digital devices such as smart phones and tablets can have an impact on looking towards the television. The availability and use of new technologies and devices by audiences and my participants have grown over recent years. Ofcom's' 2013

report ‘The Reinvention of the 1950s Living Room’ highlighted the changing environment in which television is watched. The report states that ‘over half (53%) of UK adults are now media multitasking while watching TV on a weekly basis […] A quarter (25%) are regularly ‘media meshing – doing something else but related to what they’re watching on TV’ (Ofcom, 2013). Ofcom describes media meshing as being an activity such as talking on the phone or texting; it can also refer to talking about the television programme they are watching. ‘Media stacking’ is another social phenomenon the report highlighted which involves audiences using a smart phone or a tablet for reasons unrelated to the television programmes they are watching (Ofcom, 2013). ‘Media stacking’ is also highlighted by Liz Evan’s (2011) who argues that other media is not replacing television but is complementing television viewing. This narrative is also recurrent in the findings of studies by other scholars.

One such study is Evelien D'heer and Cedric Courtois’s (2016) who examine the changes that are occurring with media and audiences. In the study, D’heer and Courtois re-work Lull's early ideas of television's social uses to understand 'the patterns of TV consumption in a multimedia living room site' (2016:4). In other words, they try to understand how the use of other media devices like the smart phones, laptops and tablets has changed and influenced the dynamic of the living room. Using Papacharissi's (2010) idea that 'the presence of these mobile Internet devices reconfigures our conventional understanding of the living room’ (D’heer & Courtois, 2016:14), they find that the TV is still the main focus in there but to a somewhat lesser extent than it used to be. They note that the TV ‘serves to create background noise or a busy atmosphere’ (D’heer and Courtois, 2016:8), while the focus of the audience is more on the tablets and computers. D'heer and Courtois acknowledge that 'second screen content is easy to consume in front of the TV screen. The devices were placed in a location within easy reach of where the participants sat to watch television (D’heer and Courtois, 2016); and that there the usage of other devices is not all consuming, thus allowing audiences to constantly switch between activities on the computer' (D’heer and Courtois, 2016:9, also see Foehr 2006).

Sherryl Wilson’s study also gives further insight into the enhanced television viewing experience second screens give audiences. ‘Second screens enable television viewers to encounter communities of other viewers with whom they engage in banter and conversation, and at other times enable individuals to use second screen apps to further immerse themselves in the diegetic world of the television program [sic]’ (Wilson, 2016: 187-188). While D’heer and Courtois mostly examined viewers’ use of other devices almost as a distraction or

as another activity to do whilst watching television, Wilson here explores how audiences use the devices to communicate and talk about the specific programmes they are watching. This additional engagement online with the television content audience are watching, Wilson argues, creates a more immersive experience.

Conversely, Evans *et al.* (2017) found that most of their participants did not use a second screen to enhance their viewing of programmes on television. In other words, there was little or no connection between what the participants were watching on TV and the websites they looked at on other devices. This was for Evans *et al.* acknowledgement that the use of digital technologies was ephemeral. Evans et al. refer to ephemeral as being media that is forgettable. For example, a viewer has a television turned on but does not remember what programme came on or what it was about. The study found that when the participants were asked about what they may have been looking at on smart phones and tablets whilst they watched television, they could not remember.

During the observation sessions, three participants (2, 4 and 5) used other devices while they watched television. All three participants were using their mobile phones, but one participant also used an iPad during the course of the observations. The participants were not using the devices for the entire time of the sessions but periodically. Participant 2 used her phone and her iPad in both sessions but more in the second session. During the course of the second observation with Participant 2 it became evident that the use of the iPad seemed to be part of her leisure and relaxation time, something to do in addition to watching television. In each session, she said to me that she was getting messages from her friend on her phone and she was checking photos posted on her Facebook news feed. Similarly, to Participant 2, Participant 5 was mainly using her phone to respond to messages she was receiving, it was unclear if this was through text messages or through applications such as WhatsApp.

Participant 4 used her phone during the course of the second observation session. The use of her phone was instigated by a scene we had both just watched in the serial *(Ishq Ka Rang Safed (The Colour of Love is White*)). In the scene, we see a close-up of the screen of a telephone that has received a text message. The text message is in Hindi, but it is not transliterated and so in Hindi script. Participant 4 asked how someone can write messages in Hindi script; she also asked if it is possible to do it on her phone. For the remainder of the serial, the participant and I talked about the phone and did not pay any attention to the

television. It was like the shot of the phone on the television reminded her of a question she had in her mind and therefore started a conversation on this topic. I speculate that regardless of who was in the room Participant 4 would have asked the question to that person. The distraction caused by the smart phone is evidence that previous scholarly assumptions about how audience look at television is inadequate. In this scenario, there was no looking towards the television and no engagement with the serial while both the participant and I tried to figure out how to send a message in Hindi or Gujarati script. After we had figured out how to change keyboards on her phone, we returned to the programme only to see the end credits rolling. These findings highlight how the use of other devices can be distracting to a viewer and therefore can have an impact on their engagement and looking.

The findings from the observations suggestion that the use of other technology devices can influence a viewers' engagement and looking in various ways. The way the devices can influence looking and engagement is dependent on what the viewer is doing/using the device for. The findings above suggested that for two of the participants using other devices can allow partial engagement and distracted looking, while for another participant no engagement occurred and no looking. However, it also needs to be highlighted that the no looking and no engagement, though continued for the duration of an episode of a serial, after we stopped looking at the phone it appeared that full engagement and other ways of looking were occurring. These findings are built upon further in the next chapter where I examine other activities that are undertaken by the participants while they watch television.

6.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I explored what impact television flow, the participants' history of television viewing and technology can have on the way they look at and engage with television.
My findings highlighted that most of the participants first watched after they arrived in the UK. This also meant they had only experienced British terrestrial television flow in the forms of public service broadcasting and commercial flow. Their exposure to transnational television from India has only been for a fraction of the time they have been shown (and in some cases continue to see) British terrestrial television flow. The responses about their knowledge of British TV emphasised their familiarity with the soap operas from the UK, America and Australia. This understanding of the soap opera genre coupled with the kind of flow they had been exposed to during their television viewing history did have an impact on their

engagement and looking. This disruption of flow seemed to indicate that it led to partial engagement and distracted looking; as well as negotiated engagement or no engagement with Indian television. I cited negotiated engagement here, in reference to discussion in Chapter 5 where I discussed how the participants found some of the narrative to be nonsensical and slowly paced. This critique could stem from the influence of British television which I highlighted in this chapter.

The channel hopping during adverts as well as fast-forwarding through them could imply two ways of looking and forms of engagement were trying to be maintained. Firstly, through channel hopping and finding another serial or programme to watch the participant can maintain what appears to be full engagement and fully focused looking. Or at the very least distracted looking and partial engagement. The use of time shifting technology allowed the one participant who recorded the serials to maintain full engagement and fully focused looking as they were watching the programmes suitable to them. I explored how the use of other technological devices influenced engagement and looking. Most of these findings revealed that the use of technology provoked no looking and distracted looking. These findings confirm Caughie's (2006) idea that the television viewer is very distracted, but it also allows for the development of other characterisations that can be used to articulate other forms of engagement and different ways of looking.

Chapter 7: Physical space, Activities and Talking

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore whether physical space, other people, activities and talk can have an impact on engagement and looking. I will argue that the physical space in which television is watched can influence different forms of engagement and different ways of looking. For example, the presence of other people in the physical space, or involvement in activities can allow full engagement, partial engagement and no engagement; as well as influence different ways of looking but predominately allowing distracted looking as well as fully focused looking and no looking. In the previous chapter, I moved away from the television texts themselves and examined other aspects of television such as the idea of flow, a viewers' history of television viewing, the use of technology and creating one's own flow and how they can impact a viewers' engagement and looking.

I will begin the chapter by first examining the physical space in which television is consumed; this section includes examining not only the space itself, but also how it is lit or and how it is furnished and decorated. In the second section, I will highlight the effect of other people in the room and the physical position of the participants as they watch television. In the third section, I will examine what activities are undertaken by the participants while they watch television. In the final section, I will look at how different kinds of talk can influence different ways of looking.

7.2 Physical Space

In Chapter 2 physical spaces in which media is consumed was observed to have an impact on a viewers' way of looking and forms of engagement. John Ellis (1982/1992) has highlighted that film and television are watched in different spaces. He argued that the biggest difference is the domestic surroundings in which audience watch television as opposed to the public surroundings in which film is consumed. This public/private binary division of space has also been understood through the masculine/feminine binary; public spaces are masculine while private spaces are feminine and for domestic use (Fraser, 1992). As a result of these connections, television has been gendered as a feminine media, which is consumed in a feminine space. Morley (1986) recognises that the domestic space is therefore different for men and women. Morley stated that 'home is primarily defined for men as a site of leisure – in distinction to the "industrial time" of their employment outside the home – while the home is primarily defined for women as a sphere of work (whether or not they also work outside the

home)' (Morley, 1986:147). The lack of leisure time for women was also a conclusion Ann Gray (1987) developed through her research on women's use of the VCR, as discussed in Chapter 5. I continue this discussion below as I explore my participants involvement in other activities.

Further to the binary divide of masculine spaces and feminine spaces, there is also an additional description of space, namely family space. Morley (1986) emphasises that the space in which television is watched is also a space in which families get together. Lindlof *et al.*'s (1988) study examining how the television set has been accommodated into the homes of American families provides us with more insight into the kinds of physical spaces. Lindlof *et al*. found that most families had placed the television on the ground floor, 'in a room called the family room, or synonymously, the den. This comfortable, informally furnished area is typically located on the ground floor, adjacent to both kitchen and the living room, and near an outside entrance that might open onto a patio, porch, or yard' (Lindlof *et al.* 1988: 171). They also found that the rooms were not used to entertain visitors, and it was away from the main front door, therefore in a more private part of the house. Another aspect of the viewing environment Lindlof *et al*. found was the position of furniture in relation to the television set. For many of the families in the sample, the main sofa was positioned facing the television (Lindlof *et al*. 1988). Other furniture in the room was a combination of moveable furniture (such as armchairs, coffee tables and end tables) and immoveable furniture, such as stools, ottomans, and small tables (Lindlof *et al.,* 1988:173). However, Lindlof *et al.* state that specific seating arrangements had few 'implicit rules' (1988:173) meaning that family members sat where they wanted, a discussion I develop further below.

The studies discussed above support my findings. The physical room in which all the observations for this study took place was the living room in each participant's home. In many ways, the living rooms of all the participants were very similar. For example, the living rooms all seemed to be the main room for leisure and relaxation in the household, and they were also rooms in which the participants received guests. However, there were also differences, such as the size of the living room and the location of the room in relation to the rest of the house. The relaxed and leisurely nature of the room was emphasised by the large comfy sofas, which were positioned predominately along the walls of the room and facing into the centre of the room, thus promoting social interaction and communication. The rooms had multiple sources from which heat could be generated, such as radiators and gas fireplaces which added to the sense of comfort. Sofas and other forms of seating in the rooms were organised in such a way

that meant one sofa was positioned directly opposite the television, while another sofa or chair faced the fireplace. The television sets were quite large (at least 32 inches) and four participants had flat screen LED television sets that have high definition capability. Two participants had flat screen television sets that were precursors to LED sets. Participant 6 had their flat screen television hanging on the chimney breast, above a gas fireplace. In Participant 6's living room only one sofa was opposite the TV and fireplace as they were positioned on the same wall. The two other sofas in the room faced each other and were positioned perpendicular to the wall with the television and fireplace. The remaining participants had placed their televisions on TV stands or small tables. Two participants (4 and 6) had the television in the middle of a wall at the far end (away from the door) of the living room. Participants 1, 2, 3 and 5 had placed the television in the corner of the room. I noted that the participants only have access to their Sky subscriptions in this room, therefore, most of their Hindi language television viewing took place in the living room.

In some ways these rooms are similar to those Lindlof *et al.* (1988) describe in their study. Lindlof *et al.* note how the rooms used to watch television were located on the ground floor and can be described as comfortable. As I have highlighted above the living rooms in which these participants watch television are also located on the ground floor. In the same way, to Lindlof *et al*. the participants' living rooms could also be described as comfortable with the number of cosy seats and sense of warmth in the rooms. However, there are some differences as well. Namely, the participants of Lindlof *et al.*'s study had larger houses with multiple reception rooms. Lindlof *et al.* describe how the main room used for television watching by the families was an informal space many referred to as a den, a cultural practice that is specifically American. This was a separate room from the living room, not readily available from the front door of the house (Lindlof *et al.* (1988). My participants did not have this additional space, and so the living room was the main space for leisure but also receiving guests. Therefore, the participants' living rooms were more formal and the seating arrangements promoted social interaction and communication, as opposed to the seating arrangements in Lindlof *et al*.'s (1988) research which noted that furniture in the rooms (dens) was positioned facing the television set (Lindlof *et al.* 1988). That is not to say that a participant could not sit directly in front of the television. With the number of seats available there were some positions the participant could sit that placed them directly opposite the television. Below I further examine the physical position the participants took during the observation. Overall, my findings are in some ways similar to those of Lindlof *et al.* but there are some differences as well. Culturally

the physical room in which my participants watch television has not changed a great deal in the last thirty years. The living room remains the one main room in which the participants settle down to watch television, it is located on the ground floor, close to other rooms on the ground floor and it creates the atmosphere of comfort and relaxation.

7.2.1 Lighting

The living rooms had various sources of light. The window was the main source of natural light, while the key source of artificial light was a fixture in the middle of the ceiling. These lights lit the room brightly and did not leave dark corners or areas. In most participants' homes, there were also other lights sources like smaller wall lights, free standing floor lamps or table lamps and strings of fairy lights. As the observations took place late at night or in the early evening during winter, all the participants had their curtains drawn, and the rooms were lit with some form of artificial light. In most cases, the participant was already in the living room watching television when I arrived. In these cases, Participants 2,3,5 and 6 were watching television in rooms that were brightly lit from the main light fitting. Participant 4 was not watching television when I arrived. We walked into the living room together, and Participant 4 turned on the main light to the front half of the room. As discussed above, this is where the television was located and where the participant sat to watch. On my arrival at the home of Participant 1 on the first day the room was brightly lit, to begin with, but when the participant settled down to watch television, she turned off the main light and turned on a small wall light. In the second session, only the small wall light lit the room. It seemed to me that the norm in this household was to light the room with just the small light as opposed to the main light fitting.

The observations above reveal that most participants did watch television in what Ellis calls 'normal light conditions' (Ellis, 1982/1992:128). In other words, five of the six participants watched television in a brightly lit room. The brightly lit room allows for numerous forms of looking to occur, especially since they allow for other activities to be undertaken as well, which I discuss in more detail below. Only Participant 1 watched television in a room only lit by a small wall lamp that was placed behind her. This set up mimics the space and the lighting of a cinema auditorium where the only light source is the projector behind the spectators. This mimicry of auditorium lighting suggests a more focused form of looking which, during our observations, Participant 1 engaged with. This observation contradicts Caughie's (2006) arguments who stated that brash television visuals are now distracting to television viewers, thus leading them to not be able to be fully engaged or allow fully focused looking to occur.

Indeed, the participants viewing practice is similar to Bhattacharya Chair's (2004) participants, often watched popular Hindi language films alone and late at night. Bhattacharya Chair's conceptualisation of the 'basement' as metaphorical space anywhere within the home where women watched popular Hindi language films. For the participants of this research it is the living that is the private space for consumption of television. Further to this, Participant 1 demonstrates that previous scholarly assumptions about looking are inadequate for a discussion of looking of the women involved in this study. The dark lighting in the room Participant 1 watched television in is relevant to the discussion about the participants' routine, which is discussed later in the chapter.

7.2.2 Décor and Furnishings

Whilst studying Cypriot households in London and New York, Myria Georgiou (2006) observed that many of the homes she visited had images of key landmarks from Cyprus on the walls. Georgiou realised that 'the pictures from the land of her origin, hanging in her New York home, remind my hostess of her sacred connection. A connection that is repeatedly referred to as frozen in time and place' (Georgiou, 2006:36). The participants of Georgiou's study placed reminders of their homeland around their homes in London and in the case above, New York. By placing these reminders around the homes, they maintain and keep alive the connection back to Cyprus. However, as Georgiou highlights, these connections were suspended at a particular moment in time. In the case of Georgiou's hostess, this was 1974. In other words, the connection the Cypriot diaspora have with their homeland is a nostalgic connection, not a recent connection. The participants of Georgiou's study remember the Cyprus they left in 1974 as opposed to the Cyprus of the mid-2000s when Georgiou conducted her research.

I made a similar observation to Georgiou with my participants, particularly with the way in which the home was decorated in a similar manner and further promoted the living room as a place for leisure and relaxation. The living rooms of participants, 1, 2, 3 and 6 were furnished with large sofas, armchairs and other large pieces of furniture which tended to make the room look a great deal smaller. It created an intimacy within the room and cosiness to promote relaxation. It is of interest to note that these sofas and armchairs provided many more seats than needed compared to the number of people in these households. Most of the households examined in this study consisted of 2 – 3 people, while there was enough seating for 5 – 7 people in the living rooms. Participant 4 also had a large sofa, armchairs and furniture but the

room was much bigger and could accommodate the furniture without overcrowding. Participant 5 had much less furniture, thus also not overcrowding the space.

All but one (Participant 5) of the living rooms were painted with light colours. Participant 2 had a feature wall that was covered in a patterned and/or textured wallpaper. Participants with lighter walls had furniture that was upholstered with dark coloured fabrics and furniture made with dark wood or varnished with dark wood stain. Participant 5, in contrast to the other participants, had the living room decorated with two different wallpaper patterns: on the bottom half, there was a striped pattern and on the top was a floral-patterned wallpaper. In contrast to the dark and busy wallpaper, participant 5 had sofas that were upholstered in a cream coloured leather. The coffee table was made from a dark wood but covered with a white lace tablecloth. Overall, the décor of the rooms follows recent trends in British interior home designs. The main feature of having light coloured walls, with a feature wall can be commonly found in homes in the UK. The décor of Participant 5 reflected a previous British interior design trend from the early to mid-2000s. I suggest that décor and furnishings were common to British Indian homes.

The rooms were filled with photos of family and friends, for example, photos of grandchildren, weddings of sons and/or daughters, family members who have passed away, graduations and school photographs. There were some prints of paintings of Hindu mythological figures, saints and deities hung up on the walls in addition to the photos. In contrast to Georgiou's study, my participants had very little or no images of home villages, towns or landmarks in India. There was little, in the living rooms at least, to remind them of India. Participant 1 and 2 had ornaments depicting Hindu deities. Participant 6 had the family's shrine in the living room, built into an alcove next to the television. However, it was only Participants 1 and 6, who when they looked at the television screen had the ornaments of Hindu deities in their eye line. These photos and ornaments add a further sense of homeliness and familiarity to the room.

The findings show that although many of the participants did watch television in brightly lit rooms, as Ellis (1982/1992) highlighted, one participants' practice contradicts this form of lighting as it was a darkened room. This form of lighting seemed to encourage full engagement and fully focused looking to occur. The spaces in which the participants watch television was predominately set up for social communication as the position and number of the seats indicated. However, there were positions in the rooms the participants could sit and it was

directly in front of the television; an aspect I examine further in the next section. This positioning of the seats highlight the dual use of the living room as a space for leisure and social interaction with visitors and family members. Also, the living room, for one participant, is also a space for worship as their home shrine is located in the room. The décor of the rooms can also influence engagement and looking, particularly for those with images of Hindu deities in the rooms. There is the implication that the décor may perpetuate spiritual engagement and *darshan* to occur.

7.3 Physical Position and Other People

In comparison to the other participants, Participant 1 looked at television in a more fully focused way because of the physical position she placed herself in relation to the television set. As I mentioned above, even though the furniture does not face the television set, there are still places one can sit in order to face it. Leoncio Barrios (1988), in his study of Venezuelan families' consumption of television, identified that due to the lack of space in the homes it was not necessarily a question of 'where to place the television set, but from where to watch it' (1988:61). Some of his participants had specific places they had developed an attachment to and often referred to as '"my own place" or "my own chair"' (Barrios, 1988:61). During the observations, I noted the different physical positions the participants sat in when they settled down to watch television. Participants 1, 2, 3 and 5 sat directly opposite the television for most of the sessions enabling them to have a full-frontal view of the television set and direct address. Participant 4, because of the way the living room was set up, sat close to the television but to the side, so the participant had to turn her head to watch television. However, on occasion, she brought her feet up to the sofa and turned in her seat to face the television. Participant 6 sat in two different positions over the course of the observations. In the first session, the participant sat on a sofa to the side of the television, but she turned in the seat to face the television set. During the second session, the participant sat on the sofa directly opposite the television.

Some of the participants did get up and move around the room a little, but they either came back to the original position opposite the television or briefly sat in another position that was also opposite the television. The physical positions the participants took up, particularly the position directly opposite the television, indicated that the participants are primarily sitting down to watch television despite other activities and distractions that may come along. All the

participants, except Participant 5, who left the room during the observation, made a conscious decision to leave. What I mean by this is that the participants did not necessarily wait for an advert break or the episode of a serial to end before they left the room. I also noted that those participants with the capabilities to rewind live broadcasts (Participants, 1, 2, 3 and 6) did not use the facilities after they had returned to the room. During the observation with Participant 4, we spent approximately 20 minutes looking at her mobile phone and not watching the serial. Once we returned to watching the serial, Participant 4 commented that she caught up with the serial in the morning when the episode is repeated. It also highlights that audiences choose to engage with traditional forms of catching up rather than utilising the available technology.

As discussed in Chapter 5, Participant 5 left the room when the *Sasural Simar Ka* (*Home of Simar's In-Laws*) started. This was a purposeful act and she was the only participant to do so in order to avoid watching the serial, for reasons discussed in Chapter 4. During this time, the participant went to prepare food for supper. This preparation lasted for almost the duration of the serial. The participant returned to the room while the serial was still on but was distracted by the preparation of the space where supper is eaten. During this time, the participant moved between the living room, dining room and kitchen. She only returned to settle in the living room to eat and when the next serial had begun. The participant indicated to me that she kept the serial on because her daughter was still watching.

The findings suggest that despite any other activities that may be undertaken whilst watching television, the position the participant takes suggest that they are first and foremost watching television, thus suggesting full engagement and fully focused looking could occur. However, as the observations reveal there are times when that position cannot be maintained and the participants leave the room, hence no looking occurs. Furthermore, there are moments, which have been examined in the previous chapter, where technological devices are used which can lead to distracted looking. Participant 5's preparation of getting supper on the table also leads to distracted looking. Activities like this are examined in more detail below.

In their studies, Barrios (1988) and Lindlof *et al.* (1988) focused on examining the social spaces within the home where television was watched by the families, for example, the living rooms in the participants' homes as opposed to bedrooms. Barrios also describes the families viewing experiences as being in "public" where other activities can also take place. These are two

concepts, of watching television in a social space and in a “public” space, is the focus of the following discussion. Ellis argues that television assumes its audience to be a family who watch television together and so ‘the viewer is cast as someone who has the TV switched on, but is giving it little attention – a casual viewing relaxing in the midst of a family group’ (Ellis, 1982/1992:162). In other words, it is assumed that the television viewer is not alone when they are watching television; they are surrounded by other television viewers, namely members of their family. This assumption that watching television is a social activity was the focus of Arne Freya Zillich’s (2014) study. She noted that when groups of people are in a room watching television together conversations will ensue. These conversations may be ‘about the events depicted on screen and the ongoing affective experience' (Zillich, 2014:170). Zillich’s findings are evidence of Ellis’ abstract notion that the TV viewer is being distracted with other people in the room. However, Zillich argues that the presence of other people whilst watching television can enhance the television viewing experience. When conversations took place, it ‘influenced specific enjoyment qualities’ (Zillich, 2014:169). For example, conversations indicating involvement in the television show intensify the viewers' empathy, and conversation indicating emotional experiences while watching television decreases viewers' suspense (Zillich, 2014:169). Barrios also identified the enriched experience his participants had when they watched television with other people in the room. For those who watched television in isolation, it was not as enriching (Barrios, 1988). Some of Morley’s (1986) female participants did talk about ‘their greatest pleasure is to be able to watch […] their favourite, when the rest of the family aren't there. Only then do they feel free enough of their domestic responsibilities to "indulge" themselves in the kind of attentive viewing which their husbands engage in routinely' (Morley, 1986:159 - 160). The lack of opportunities with fully engaged and fully focused looking for women, as discussed above, comes down to the idea that the domestic space is still seen as a place of work for women. Morley acknowledges that the social roles placed upon women within the home restricts their attention towards the television, an aspect I expand on below. However, even though Morley’s participants may not get many opportunities to watch on their own or attentively they largely acknowledged that even though television viewing is a social activity (Morley 1986:150), they enjoyed watching television by themselves on occasion.

During the observations, participants 1, 5 and 6 had another member of the family, as well as myself, in the room as they sat down to watch television. Participants 1 and 6 were joined by their husbands. Participant 1’s husband only watched the serial for a short amount of time

before he fell asleep. A short time later he left the room to retire to bed and for the remainder of the observation it was just Participant 1 and myself. I did not observe any change in the way in which the participant watched television with her husband in the room and when he was not in the room. Participant 6's husband watched the serials with the participant and me. On occasion Participant 6 asked him to fetch something from either the kitchen or the bedroom. The participant's look towards the television generally did not change, but there were times when the husband made a comment about the serial we were watching and occasionally joined in with a conversation between the participant and myself. There is the suggestion that with Participant 6 asking her husband to bring various items to her there is some equality between the couple in terms of domestic positions compared to their positions as outlined in Morley's study.

During the observations with Participant 5, we were joined by her daughter. The presence of the participants' daughter led to conversations around the daughter's' bedtime, preparation for school the following day and her use of the mobile devices like the iPad and smartphone. The observations indicate that the participant became partially engaged as she tried to persuade her daughter to go to bed or stop using the iPad. This behaviour is largely in line with the gender roles Morley (1986) found in his study. Women are not able to watch television with full engagement as there are roles they must fulfil; in the scenario described above Participant 5 is still in the role of mother and is encouraging her daughter to go to sleep; but this encouragement to go to sleep only occurred towards the end of the evening as opposed to continually throughout the observations. Also in contrast to Morley's findings most of my participants did not have any household duties to undertake and therefore it appears that they could maintain full engagement and fully focused looking. Below I discuss in the participants' routine in more detail but I just want to note here that even if I had not been there the participants would have watched television by themselves as it was part of their viewing habits.

The section above highlights that the participants are initially positioning themselves in the room to indicate they are primarily going to watch television or it will be a parallel activity and this appears to allow full engagement and fully focused looking. The findings also revealed that, on the one hand, for some of the participants watching television is a household activity, as established by previous studies (Barrios, 1988 & Zillich 2014); on the other hand, as Morley acknowledged, some of the participants watched television alone. Watching television with

other members of the family in the room did distract the participant during the observations, appearing to allow partial engagement and distracted looking to occur. While watching television alone appears to allow full engagement and fully focused looking, but I build on this in more detail below as I examine the different activities the participant undertook while they watched television.

7.4 Activities

Above, I discussed how Barrios acknowledged that other activities take place in conjunction with watching television. Ellis suggested that the broadcast image is constructed in a way that allows the viewer to be engaged in other activities while also 'watching' television (Ellis, 1982/1992). Empirical studies have examined audience behaviour while they watched television and their findings largely fell into two categories. The first category found that while the television set was switched on the audience in the room stopped whatever it is they were doing. The second category found that audiences engage in other activities while watching television (Collett and Lamb, 1986, cited in Morley, 1995:173) and as evidenced by Barrios it is this argument that prevailed. The studies examined both men and women, therefore, the difference between the two categories can be related to differences between how men and women watch television, as discussed above through Morley's study, men can watch television 'wholeheartedly', while women, who are still consumed by domestic chores can only watch distractedly or guiltily' (Morley, 1986:147). Clancey's study found that audiences were engaged in numerous activities that include, but are not limited to eating/drinking, reading, chores, childcare, and homework. Clancey also found that it was mainly the younger respondents who engaged in other activities whilst watching television; 'respondents age 50 and older reported a higher incidence of "television – only"' (Clancey, 1994:9). When asked what might bring their attention back to the television if they had stopped watching, the respondents listed a number of elements like hearing laughter, a loud sound or sex/violence/language. The study concludes that 'classifying television viewing is a complicated social phenomenon' (Clancey, 1994). Further to the authors discussed above, Morley's observations as well as the studies by Clancey and Krugman and Johnson indicate that audiences are partaking in various other activities whilst watching television and that does influence different ways of looking. The studies and observations highlight that there are a number of variables to consider, including the time of day television is being watched and the activity that is being engaged with. Other factors in terms of physical space can also play a role in influencing the kind of looking that

takes place, factors such as the location of the set and whether there are other people in the room.

During this study, all participants partook in some form of activity during the observation sessions. Some activities were only brief, for example, Participant 1 only spent a small amount of time having a snack, while others lasted the entire session. All participants left the living room at some point during the observations. Most were brief absences linked to other activities like getting something to eat or drink or bringing their phone from another room into the living room. The absences occurred at various times, some during advert breaks, while others left as the serial we were watching was still on. Other than Participant 5's absence described above the other participants left the room for on average of two to four minutes at a time. The main activities I observed participants doing while they watched television centred on eating and drinking, sewing, talking on the phone, preparing vegetables for dinner the following day and sketching. Three participants (2, 4 and 5) used other devices, such as smart phones and tablets, while they watched television and I discuss this in more detail below.

All participants had something to eat or drink during the observations. All but one ate and/or drank while seated and watching television. Participant 3 alone left the room to take a drink of water in each session, but all remaining participants ate and drank while sat in the living room. Participant 4 brought food into the living room with her before she sat down to watch television, indicating that she planned to eat during her daily television viewing. Participants 1, 2 and 6 got up while their viewing to get a drink or something to eat - an unplanned activity.

Participant 2 spent most of our first session sewing on a machine she had set up in front of her on a sofa. I noticed a pattern whereby she glanced at the television at moments that were dictated by her sewing. For example, she was sewing cushions for the local temple, so Participant 2 placed two pieces of fabric together and put it under the needle on the machine - while she did this Participant 2 glanced at the screen. While she sewed the edges together, she did not look at the television, but once she finished, she then gave the television a quick glance. This pattern occurred throughout the session. Even though the participant was always not looking at the television there were other forms of engagement. By listening she was still demonstrating some level of engagement.

This observation of the Participant 2 calls into question exactly what is meant by 'watching'

television. In Chapters 1 and 2, I touched on how ideas of 'watching' television have been developed in recent studies. But earlier work has also indicated that consuming television is a multisensory experience. Krugman and Johnson's (1991) early audience study revealed that for audiences 'visual orientation or competing activities indicate that viewing is a multifaceted experience that is not all or nothing' (Krugman and Johnson, 1991:np). In other words, watching television can be a multisensory experience; if the audiences' eyes are not fixed on the television screen, then it does not mean they do not know what is going on in the programme they are watching. They could be engaging with the programme in other ways, namely listening to the events unfolding, as discussed in Chapter 5.

During one of her observations Mankekar was convinced a couple of her participants had not watched or understood the programme they were watching, only to find out the following day whilst interviewing them, they had known what was going on in the serial all along (Mankekar, 1999) because they had been listening to the programme the whole time. Krugman and Johnson also state that 'audience activity is important in understanding if differences in viewing exist' (Krugman and Johnson, 1991:np), therefore acknowledging the possibility of different ways of looking at television. They define activity 'as a range of motives and behaviours that take place prior to, during and after viewing' (Krugman and Johnson, 1991). Even though Krugman and Johnson were comparing how audiences of television as it is being broadcast differs from audiences who are watching a rented video there are still relevant aspects of their findings, such as the acknowledgement of watching television being a multi-sensory experience, that are pertinent to this study. A more recent study by Ksenia Frolova (2017) examined what audiences understood as 'watching television'. Frolova, whose study focused on parents, found that even though some parents do have the television on in the background they rarely 'watched' it. The participants were not able to recall what programmes were on during this time as they had paid little to no attention to them. This leads Frolova (and others, see Weissmann 2015 and Evans et al. (2017)) to question what is actually considered watching television.

The findings in the section reiterate and acknowledge the conclusions of the studies discussed above. Like other television audiences my participants undertook other activities while they watched television. However, what my findings highlight is that most of the participants undertook other forms of leisure-based activities (sewing) or necessary activities (eating and drinking). Only one participant undertook a domestic chore while they watched television

(preparing vegetables). Another difference the findings from the observations acknowledge is that many of these activities were not pre-planned, particularly the preparation of vegetables. The lack of pre-planning indicates that the participants were primarily focused on watching television as their main activity; while the planned activities suggests watching television is a parallel activity to the other activity. These findings appear to reveal that when other activities are undertaken a variety of forms of engagement and looking are occurring. Depending on the activity, regardless of whether it is planned, suggests the participants are fully engaged; however, there are numerous fluctuations in the different ways of looking that vary from no looking, distracted looking to fully focused looking. The findings suggest that engagement varies when the participant leaves the room, thus allowing no engagement and no looking to occur. However, as the participants only leave the rooms for a moment it further highlights the short-lived nature of some forms of engagement.

7.5 Talking and television

Earlier in the chapter, I highlighted Zillich's findings on the role of conversation while watching television. In this section, I will examine this idea in more detail focussing on different kinds of conversations that can take place whilst watching television. For example, from general conversations about daily lives to gossiping about the programme being watched at any one time. I had general conversations with all the participants during the observations. These conversations occurred throughout the sessions and were spontaneously started either by myself or the participant or a member of the family who was also watching television. Some general conversations were instigated by something seen on television, for example the conversation discussed above with Participant 4 about the different keyboards on her smartphone; or by something they had remembered, for example, prior to my arrival, Participant 5 had been making an Indian sweet with her friend. During the observation, she remembered she had some left and offered me a piece. All participants asked about my parents, some also asked about my brother and his family. I also asked after their families as well. During the conversation, the attention was divided between myself and the television and, if they were doing an activity, the activity. This reiterates my findings discussed above, adding further evidence that there are different forms of engagement and different ways of looking that occur. They also emphasise the fluid nature of engagement and looking.

7.5.1 Talking about the serials

Marie Gillespie (1995) found her participants saw the manner in which the soap opera *Neighbours* narrated the plot was similar to that of gossip, and she argued that teenage viewers' 'identification with the soap *Neighbours* is more an identification with the processes of narration and with gossip than with particular characters *per se*, as is conventionally perceived' (Gillespie, 1995:159). In other words, Gillespie is able to acknowledge that unlike viewers who identify with characters in soap operas, the teenage participants of her study identified with the way the storyline was narrated; which the teenagers connected to gossip. During the observations, lengthy conversations were had with Participants 3, 4, 5 and 6 about the serials. For example, whilst watching *Thapki Pyar Ki* (2015 – 2016, Star Plus) Participant 4 explains the premise of the serial to me:

> Participant 4: [With this one that Thapki can't talk. It's a story about her But she's gotten married and its] just… [these two are her sister in laws {points to the screen}… And this one {another character appears} She had a] boyfriend [not a] boyfriend [but he was going to be her] husband. [But this woman came and claimed] she loved him and I want to get married to him… [Dhruv had a business where Thapki worked and they fell in love. But the mother in law didn't know that Thapki was deaf especially when the was being arranged. The mother in law didn't know Thapki speaks with a stammer. Then there was something on TV the mother in law saw, she puts her head phones on she hear her speak and that's how she speaks] 'I don't want her to get married with my son. [So, then he got married to her. Then Thapki got married to brother.]

The narration of the story begins with the overarching premise. The participant states the character is deaf and the serial is about her, the character of Thapki. However, the narration soon moves into a description of how Thapki came to marry Dhruv and the reaction of the mother in law to her disability. It seemed that the participant thought the mother in the serial was being unreasonable and unbelievable that she denies one son (Dhruv) marrying Thapki but is happy for her other son (also adopted son) to marry her. In the narration, the participant is not clear about which character Dhruv ends up marrying. The participant slips into talking about the narrative in a way that conveys their familiarity and in-depth knowledge of the serial. However, they forget that the person they are speaking to, in this case myself, was not as familiar with the narrative and characters.

> Participant 3: [Look here we have Santoshi Maa her parents have died – this girl {points to the screen} and these are her paternal aunts and uncles who shun her {still pointing out characters on screen}…Her poor grandma tries to help her. Her parents worked for the government so when they died they got loads of money about 3 lakh and these people have stolen it from her. There is another paternal uncle who has left her in the jungle.[xxxix]

In this reaction to the serial, the participant is referring to the main protagonist of the serial, Santoshi. But her first sentence she refers to her has Santoshi Maa – referring to the Goddess, which the serial and the main protagonist is named after. The participant also slips between narrating the early part of the story and referring to how she feels about the grandmother and the paternal relations. She refers to her as "poor" as if pitying and feeling sorry for her. While she refers to the paternal relations as "these people" after describing to me how they stole the money. This response is another example of disliked characters as discussed in chapter 4. In this situation the participant dislikes a group of characters as opposed to there being just one as acknowledged by Modleski (1979).

Conservations with Participant 2 were not as detailed as the discussions cited above. For example, at the beginning of the first session Participant 2 watched a sit-com called *Sumit Sambhal Lega* (*Sumit Will Handle It*, 2015 – 2016) which she mentioned was a new serial that she had just begun to watch. The observations with Participants 3, 4, 5 and 6 led to detailed conversations about the serials we watched together. With Participants 3 and 4 the conversation revolved around the participants bringing me up to date with the narrative of the serial and pointing out to me who the main characters are. This included telling me who the main protagonist was as well as the main antagonists. The way Participants 3 and 4 related details seemed to have a 'gossipy' tone about them. This is similar to previous findings such as those established by Hobson (1989) who observed her participants talk about the narrative of *EastEnders* in a 'gossipy' tone.

Even though Gillespie (1995) and Hobson (1989) examined different audiences, similar observations were made across the two studies. Both Hobson and Gillespie notes that their participants told the story of what has happened in the soap opera then perhaps relate it back to something that had happened in real life. In other words, these participants used the narrative from a soap opera to help them talk about the same or a similar event that has occurred in real life. In Hobson's research a narrative arc from *EastEnders* that was broadcast

during the study was used by other participants as a jumping off point to find out about a certain event in the life of the South Asian woman who was part of her sample. Her other participants wanted to know what the South Asian woman had been through and used the narrative, which was similar to the participant's experience, as a way of learning more. Similarly, an anecdote Participant 5 revealed to me involved her own encounter with a woman in India who had become possessed, and was based on our prior discussion of the serial *Sasural Simar Ka*, (which has already been talked about in terms of the supernatural themes within it in chapter 4). It suggests Participant 5 used the discussion of the serial to talk about her real-life experience, similarly to the viewers in Hobson and Gillespie's observations. This response seems to indicate that because of her experience seeing a woman possessed herself, the narrative of the first possession allowed the participant to be fully engaged and possibly allow fully focused looking to occur.

The responses from the participants suggest that even though they are involved in talking about the serial there are various ways in which they can firstly be engaged with the serial and secondly be looking at the serial. During the conversations they could still be fully engaged with the serial through looking and/or listening. Alternatively, they could also have been partially engaged or not engaged at all, but it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when these forms of engagement occurred. When they were explaining the narrative and using what they saw on the screen as a cue or prompt to narrate the story implies that they were partially engaged in the serial and distracted looking was occurring. But, as I indicated in the previous chapter, the repetitive use of this storyline leads to other forms of looking, namely no looking in the case of Participant 5.

7.5.2 Talk of Routine

In his interviews with families and their consumption of television, Morley (1986) found that very few of the women he interviewed planned their television viewing. However, the exception was 'in terms of already knowing which evenings and times their favourite series are on and thus not needing to check the schedule. This is also an indication of a different attitude to viewing as a whole. Many of the women have a much more take-it or leave-it attitude, not caring much if they miss things (except for their favourite serials)' (Morley, 1986:152-153). In other words, the women Morley spoke to knew what time the programmes they wanted to watch were going to be broadcast. They did not need to check the TV schedule and they did not seem to be bothered about missing some programmes, however, one kind of programme

they did not miss was the serials. Gray also found this with her participants, who emphasised 'the importance of viewing a series, like *Dallas*, routinely and regularly in order to become involved with it' (Gray,1992:92). D'heer and Courtois also observed that their participants sat down to watch TV between 7pm and 8pm 'after dinner is finished and the cleaning up done' (D'heer and Courtois, 2016:8), in other words the participants only sat down to watch television when all the chores and dinner had been completed.

At the start of some of the observations I noted how Participants 2, 3, 4 and 5 took the opportunity to describe to me their regular routine. This consisted of a description of their normal day, punctuated with a description of when they settled down to watch television. For example, Participant 2 described how after she and her husband came back from the temple in the evening, they have something to eat and then her husband goes to sleep around 10pm. After that she watched the serials while she sews or does something else like sort out her mail. Participant 1 similarly watched television in the late evening after coming back from the temple. She describes her routine in the following manner:

> Participant 1: we go to *mandir* (temple), when we come back we eat and watch the news. We'll see if there's any… I I turn Sky on and put... just check… the some channels for Indian movies see if there anything nice we'll watch that. If there is nothing on then I'll start watching my programmes. Recorded programme.

The participant clarifies that it is the BBC News at 10 she watches, after which she will check to see what is currently being broadcast on the Indian film channels. It is only if she cannot find anything on there, she will watch the programmes she has recorded. In the response Participant 1 describes how she first goes through the channels to find a film to watch and only then turns her attention to the serials.

It is interesting that these two participants arrange their television viewing to take place after they have visited the temple. This is not a part of all the participants' routine, which I discuss in more detail below, but for these participants it suggests that they could that Participants 1 & 2 begin their television viewing with a specific form of engagement already occurring. In other words, because of their visit to the temple, the participants could already be spiritually engaged. This form of engagement could continue as they settle to watch the serials. However, there are two issues with this assumption. Firstly, this spiritual engagement may decline or end completely as both participants also highlighted that they undertake other activities and watch

other programmes prior to settling down to watch serials. Secondly, Participant 2 acknowledged, in Chapter 3, that she does not think a viewer can take *darshan* from television, therefore suggesting she is not spiritually engaged.

Participant 3 described how during the day she does her household chores, cooking as well as running errands before settling down in the evenings to watch television. A couple of times, Participant 3 also referred to having nothing else to do during the long dark winter nights. She states how she tries to get all her chores done during the day when it is light, but as soon as it becomes dark there is not much else to do apart from watch television, especially since she cannot drive or access other forms of transport in the evenings in winter. Participant 5's routine involves her doing household chores, cooking and running errands. In the late afternoon, after her daughter comes home from school, her time is spent preparing snacks for herself and her daughter, tidying up and doing laundry. From about 7pm onwards both she and her daughter sit down to watch the serials.

In the same way, to Participant 1, Participant 4 also describes a similar process and then talks me through the different serials she is watching at the time of the observation,

> Participant 4: [So], I just flick around every single one wherever there is coming [see all of these… {Participant points at the television screen}..movie channel [there is an ad break now on you see here on the 795 there is an ad break].[xl]
>
> Interviewer: What are you watching at the moment?
>
> Participant 4: I watch on Rishtey *Thapki Pyar Ki*.. I watch this {Points to the television} at 8 o'clock. [And at 8.30 on Colors I watch a show. That show on Colors soon will be *Ishq Ka Rang Safed*. Then at 9 o'clock it will be *Swaragini* on the same channel]. And then that's it to half nine. [I will watch it [{referring to *Big Boss*} and then either I will watch some English programmes].

She normally goes to bed around 10pm where she watches the news bulletins as she gets ready for bed. She then went on to talk about the television she watches in the afternoon after she gets home from work - normally daytime quiz shows like *Tipping Point* (2012 -, ITV) or the *Chase* (2009 -, ITV). After she watches them she will go to cook dinner, eat, clear up then sit down to watch the soaps. It seems for this participant that the television watched in the afternoon is something to watch briefly, possibly hurriedly because there are still jobs to do, mainly making dinner. It is only after dinner has been cooked, eaten and cleared away that she

can sit down and focus on the television and so this is the time she watches the serials. It is also at this time the new episodes of the serials are broadcast. The discussion here highlights that the participant has learnt the schedule of the main networks she watches. The knowledge of each channel number indicates that she does not need to flick from one channel to the next. She can input the number and go straight to that channel. The responses also indicate the participant accesses Indian film channels alongside those that broadcast serials, suggesting the participant may watch a film alongside the serials or instead of the serials on occasion.

These conversations reveal that on the one hand many of the women have similar routines to those found by Morley (1986) but on the other hand there are several differences too. The main similarity to Morley's participants is that the women settle down to watch television once all the household chores are done and for some, exemplified by Participant 2, once the rest of the household has gone to bed. The ability to settle down to watch television suggests that the participants are generally enjoying leisure time by watching television and so allowing full engagement and allowing fully focused looking to occur. But as discussed above, for some participants even this leisure time can be a time when other jobs and activities are undertaken, as discussed above. One aspect that is significantly different from other studies and discussions of routine is the acknowledgment by two participants that they watch television after they have visited the temple. The visits to the temple could influence the participants' engagement and looking at television in terms of allowing spiritual engagement and *darshan* to occur. However, as the responses indicate some time passes between their arrival home from the temple and their television viewing, therefore it appears this influence of darshanic engagement and *darshan* is lessened. This can also be examined alongside the responses from the participants in Chapter 4 and it appears that these visits do not influence engagement and looking, particularly for Participant 2.

In this section the responses highlight that generally the participants' full engagement with the serials as they narrated the storylines as a form of gossip. During the narration the participants were still looking at the television and it appeared that the participants were partially engaged and distracted looking was occurring, especially as the participants were using the serial as triggers to explain the storyline. The findings regarding routines largely highlight how all the of the participants finish their chores and settle down to watch television. But a key difference in terms of routines came from two of the participants who visited the temple each evening prior to watching television. There is an implication that their visits could have an influence on their

engagement and looking (potentially spiritual engagement and *darshan*); but additional details of their routines imply this influence is lessened as there is some time and other activities that are undertaken prior to watching television.

7.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I explored external factors that can influence different ways viewers engage with and look at television. The external factors I focused on include the physical space in which the participants watch television, the physical position of the viewer, other people in the room, activities and talking. These factors can allow different forms of engagement, particularly, full engagement, partial engagement and no engagement to occur. I further argue that these factors also allow different ways of looking specifically fully focused looking, distracted looking and no looking to occur.

The findings highlighted that the physical room and the position the participants sat in seemed to be geared towards fully focused looking and full engagement with the serials. The examination of the physical spaces also suggested that lighting can play a role on what form of engagement can occur as well as what kind of looking occur. A darker room can facilitate full engagement as well as fully focused form of looking. However, only one of the participants in the study watched television in darkened room; other research would need to be conducted to see if there is a pattern. Even though the environment and the place the participant sits may indicate the intention to be fully engaged and fully focused, other factors such as other people in the room, talking and activities can led to distracted looking and no looking as well as partial or no engagement. But it appeared that undertaking activities can affect the engagement and looking but it is not only dependent on the activity is undertaken, but more significantly, what kind of activity is undertaken. Some activities such as sewing, or sketching allowed the participants to maintain full engagement (through listening) with the serials but where only distracted looking was occurring. However, in some cases, if I had not been there the participant would have watched television by themselves. This suggests that if I had not been there, the participants might have practised fully focused looking.

The routines described by the participants were on the one hand similar to those found in previous studies. The participants waited until they had completed all their domestic chores before settling down to watch the serials. However, the biggest difference in terms of routine

was the regular, almost daily visits to the temple by two of the participants. This element of their routine could allow for spiritual engagement to occur. However, this form of engagement may not occur at all for one participant (Participant 2) and for Participant 1 it could be in flux with other forms of engagement as she watches other programmes prior to watching the serials.

The findings also highlight that the participants all watched television in their living rooms which had multiple uses, namely for leisure, for social interactions and for religious practice. In a cultural sense this practice of watching television in the living room has not changed from what was established in other studies. The range of activities the participant undertook were similar to those found in previous studies as well. The activities included hobbies, small domestic chores and social activities such as talking on the phone.

Overall, in this chapter I have highlighted how external factors, such as the physical space in which television is watched, undertaking other activities and talking, can impact and influence different forms of engagement and different forms of looking at television.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Key Findings and Contribution

In this thesis, I set out to conduct a television audience study that examined the complex ways of looking at, and engaging with, television. Through the examination of various factors such as: the text itself; the use of television technology; physical environments; and an audiences' television viewing history; this research sought to, deepen our understanding of established characterisations of looking, and engagement. Overall, the study revealed that the participants of this study look at, and engage with, television in a negotiated manner. These findings reiterate much of the work undertaken by scholars such as Morley, 1980; Ang, 1985; Raminder Kaur (2005), Shakuntala Banaji (2006/2012; 2014), and others. It confirmed that overall, the viewing practices of the women are in line with the general population in the UK. The research also helps to establish that many of the viewing practices were like those of other British television audience studies and confirmed that not a great deal had changed in the last 30 years. Most of the women still watched the serials as they were being broadcast. Some elements that had changed since the earlier studies was the number of channels now available via satellite and the use of smart devices. Although the findings are similar to previous studies the research still provides a valid insight into what elements and factors of personhood can impact and influence the negotiation of viewing for older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women, which other studies have not examined.

Throughout the study I purposefully chose to create two separate sets of characterisations. In other words, I examined and developed a set of characterisations that to refer to looking and a set of characterisations to refer to engagement, rather than one set of characterisations that would connote both looking and engaging. I consciously moved away from the established understanding of characterisations such as the gaze which came loaded with references to a way of looking and a form of engagement. By separating the characterisations, I was able to create a more nuanced understanding which highlighted that engagement and looking are not in tandem with each other. One form of engagement does not equate to one way of looking, for example, if a viewer is fully engaged it does not equate to the viewer being fully focused in their looking. Instead the multisensory nature of television and the environment in which it is viewed allows for fluid and complex oscillations between different ways of looking and forms of engagement. In other words, full engagement can occur regardless of whether a viewer is looking distractedly, not looking or is fully focused looking is occurring. Conversely if a viewer is looking distractedly at the television it does not necessarily indicate the viewer is only partially engaged or not engaged, they could also be fully engaged. Finally, these characterisations of

looking and engagement are not static, they are not maintained by this audience throughout an evening of viewing or an episode.

As noted above the characterisation is used in the thesis ranged were no looking to distracted looking and fully focused looking. For forms of engagement I used fully engaged, partially engaged, not engaged, negotiated engagement, and ruptured engagement. One further characterisation, *darshan*, was also examined as it was pertinent and relevant to not only the audience being examined but also in relation to the texts as well. *Darshan* in Sanskrit means to look and be looked at and is a two ocular gesture practiced in some forms of Hinduism. I wanted to examine *darshan* initially to see if opportunities were given to audiences in prime-time Hindi language serials.

In order to examine different ways of looking and forms of engagement I employed a mixed methods approach in this research. The methodological approach was borne out of both texts based (Ellis, (1982/1992; Geraghty, 1991) and empirical based studies, especially ethnographic scholarship (Lull, 1990; Gillespie, 1995; Mankekar, 1999; and Tufte, 2000). It is not a large sample which does not allow for generalisation but, what the research does begin to do, is not only update the work of previous scholarship into British South Asian television audiences (Gillespie, 1995 & 1995a and Dudrah 2002 and 2005) which is over 20 years old; but it also provides insight into how transnational Hindi language television has expanded in the UK amongst this specific demographic within the diaspora.

Firstly, I did find, that opportunities to take *darshan* are presented in various scenarios within the serials. Opportunities to take *darshan* were presented towards images of Hindu deities, actors playing the role of deities, important figures, as well as, male leads in family-based serials. The construction of the scenes included conventions such as: mediation from a character and the director; a montage sequence from viewpoint shots to point of view shots; a tableaux moment (the camera pauses on a frontal shot of the object of *darshan*); and, often, a soundtrack to signal the moments of *darshan*. In the scenes the viewer is encouraged to identify with the character who is seeking *darshan*. In the darshanic relationship the seeker is inferior to the object of the look of *darshan*. During the research, I found that *darshan* was more a form of engagement, rather than a way of looking. The audience need to have the intention of taking *darshan* in order to engage with the opportunity in this way when it arises. This is because as long as a viewer is looking at the screen in some way, either fully or

distractedly, they have the potential to take *darshan*, but in order to do so, they should already be thinking about taking it when the opportunity is presented. In other words, there is no change in the way the participant looks at the screen, this remains the same, it is how the participant engages with the serial that changes. In the study, I also did not see any outward physical motion when the opportunities to take *darshan* arose. I had assumed, naively, that a gesture such as bowing of the head, may occur, but this was not the case.

Secondly, the analysis outlined the producers' preferred way for an audience to look (fully focused) as well as ideal forms of engagement (fully engaged). However, the responses from the participants suggested that a blend of fully focused looking, distracted looking and, occasionally *darshan* were possible. The findings implied that for *darshan* to be taken, the participant had to be consciously thinking about taking it. In other words, the intention to take *darshan* should already be in the minds of the viewer. Therefore, when the opportunity arose, they could take *darshan*. The discussions further suggested that engagement was negotiated but also blended with full and partial engagement. Chapter 5 examined the narrative elements of the serials and the findings suggested the following factors can have an impact on looking and engagement; narrative theme, pace of the narrative, liked characters, disliked characters, disruption to visual aesthetic. The discussions with the participants suggested that if a narrative's subject matter is interesting, liked characters (including handsome characters), and identifying with specific scenes, could lead to fully engaged and looking in a fully focused way. However, if a narrative theme is continued and becomes nonsensical it can potentially lead to no looking, distracted looking; and negotiated engagement, no engagement or partial engagement. It was also implied that the slow pace of the narrative, the disruption of flow, the number of advert breaks (the latter two factors examined in Chapter 6) can also lead to similar ways of looking and forms of engagement form the participants. The findings indicated that scenes with disliked characters and traumatic events happening to characters the participants identify with could lead to ruptured engagement, as well as fully focused looking, no looking or distracted looking. The study implies, contrary to Caldwell's (1995) assertions, that by and large the serials are constructed in a way (through visuals, aurally and narratively) that require the viewer to be fully engaged either by looking and listening or by listening. Moving beyond the text, as I have started to do above, the findings implied that various external factors can lead to a combination of distracted looking and no looking; as well as negotiated engagement, partial engagement and no engagement. The factors looked at specifically in this research included the use of smart phone devices, undertaking of activities as well as other people in

the room and talking. It was interesting to see that physically the environment and the position the participant took to look at and engage with television implied their intention to be fully focused and fully engaged. But it was the addition of the other factors that can lead to way of looking and forms of engagement changing and fluctuating.

Finally, in the thesis I also wanted to examine if the participants saw, and understood, the political subtexts embedded within the serials. This study has identified some of the ways in which the Hindutva agenda has become embedded in the serials, and its appropriation of *darshan*. Through the repeated use of iconography, and the construction of *darshan,* I explored the participant's understanding of these messages. The findings suggested that even though the power dynamics of *darshan* have been appropriated by the Hindutva agenda, the discussion of the participants responses seemed to imply that it is negotiated. But more research needs to be done in this area, potentially through further interviews that focus on the political underpinning of the serials. The findings did highlight a complicated negotiation of patriarchal structures, whereby in their everyday lives there was evidence of challenges to patriarchal norms. But, through their enjoyment of serials they were also partaking in patriarchal imaginaries represented in the serials. In other words, the women are not entirely traditional in the sense that they adhere to all patriarchal structures, but at the same time it is also not entirely egalitarian. There is a spectrum of positions they occupy that allows them to challenge patriarchal norms, as well as participate in them.

The participants would also seek to take *darshan* from a religious figure, like an image of deity, or guru, or perhaps even a symbolic representation of a deity. I argue that the participants would not look at a male protagonist of a family-based serial, who is framed through full frontal framing, and presented through a montage of shots, as someone they ought to seek *darshan* from. The participants either resist or ignore the appropriated use of *darshan* in the serials towards non-religious male protagonists as well as the repetitive use of marigolds, and the similarities of the families in the serials all being from entrepreneurial, wealthy, urban, north Indian high caste backgrounds. I argued in Chapter 4 that for the myths to work both, the producer and the viewer, need to have the same background and context. This is not the case for these women living here in the UK. I do acknowledge that more research would need to be conducted with not only a larger sample but also in relation to what other kind of media the women have access to.

8.2 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

In Chapter 3 I stated the methodological limitations of this study. These were focused on the sample size that informs the in-depth sections of the study and my relationship with the participants. How to overcome these limitations are discussed in that chapter. Moving forward another approach, to avoid the issues around small samples sizes, could have been to break the project up into two projects. Each project would have specific sample sizes and methods. The first could have focused on quantitative data which could have been made broader to include audience members of both genders and a variety of genres being broadcast on Indian language television channels. The second would focus more on the in-depth study allowing a deeper look into a specific demographic and developed strategies to recruit more participants for the study. For example, I would have spent more time in the first year of the study informally talking to women amongst the demographic about the project. This would have allowed me to build a rapport specifically about television. I should have also begun to watch the serials myself, thus allowing me to be informed about the serials during these initially conversations.

Due to my lack of experience of conducting empirical research I was unable to follow on responses during the interviews, that may have helped to contextualise why the participants responded in the way they did. One way I could have followed up on questions was to ask about political affiliations or enquire further into family relations and personal history. I could have asked for definitions of terms and then tried to explain it back to them in my own words to make sure I understood. Most of all I should have scheduled time for additional interviews to take place.

With more time, there are several aspects I would develop. Firstly, I would conduct the survey in neutral spaces in order to have access to respondents of all ages, and without the environment that led some potential participants to hesitant, thus, not take part in the survey. Secondly, I would conduct more observations, either over a month or ask the participants to complete a diary of the viewing practices, as well as, their thoughts and opinions on the serials they watched. This would lead to deeper understanding into their television viewing and ask them to keep a diary of the viewing for times when observations were not possible. In addition to this I would also increase the sample size of informants for the in-depth part of the study. By observing more participants, different ways of looking and forms of engagement can be

examined in more detail and may also reveal other ways to characterise looking and engagement.

There are numerous directions in which this research can develop. The focus can remain on Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic community members, aged 50 and over, but the field of study can broaden out to a regional or national level in order to examine different ways of looking. Other ways to build on this study would be to move away from the women's daily viewings of serials. The different ways of looking that have been identified in this study are specific to the participants at the centre of this study and their consumption of prime-time Hindi serials. This can be built on by examining different ways of looking while Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women watch other kind programmes. For example, the focus could be on when the women watch Indian films on television or how and when they watch news. Building on ideas of different ways of looking but also examining the religious aspect of the women's lives, future research could explore how they watch religious programming on channels like Aastha.

Future research can also move in a direction away from focussing on women within the diasporic community and examine other members individually. For example, it would be interesting to examine how men within the diaspora watch television and if their ways of looking are different. In addition to exploring different ways of looking for men it can also be used to examine how children within the community look at television. This research can be developed to go further beyond simply examining Indian and Hindu diasporic communities. Future research could be conducted into other diasporic communities such as (but not limited to), the Indian and Pakistani Sikh diaspora, Punjabi speaking Pakistani Islamic diaspora, other diasporic communities from the Caribbean and African nations and so on. This research does not need to focus on Hindi serials as I have highlighted above, it can also examine audiences of sport on television, documentaries and other non-fiction programming.

To conclude, in this study I have begun to articulate the complex and fluid nature of engagement with and looking at television. By focussing on older Gujarati speaking Indian Hindu diasporic women and their daily viewings of prime-time Hindi language serials I have begun to highlight the ways of looking and forms of engagement that are specific to this audience. The characterisations referring to the look are fully focused looking, distracted looking and no looking. The characterisations for referring to engagement are fully engaged,

partially engaged, darshanic engagement, negotiated engagement and ruptured engagement. The study strongly emphasises the need to move away from text focused studies and supported combined methods to be used to help understand how television is viewed as well as understand how meanings are constructed. Although the sample did not allow for generalizable findings it did, however, bring to the fore the viewing practices of an audience previously overlooked. The study also has provided a framework through which other television audiences can be explored.

End Notes

[i] The transliterated words in this thesis are largely taken from the original source. Some writers have used the Sanskrit ending '-a' in their writing and others have not, for example *darshana* or *darshan*. In direct quotes from the sources I have used the spelling of the author, at other times I have mostly included the ending '-a'. The translation of Sanskrit terms have been taken again from the original source, while others have been established through online Sanskrit to English dictionaries.

[ii] The *linga* is an abstract representation symbol of the God Shiva. The *liṅga* is a phallus-shaped, vertical shaft, usually set into a pedestal (*pīṭha*) in the shape of a *yoni* (vulva), representing Śiva's *śakti*, or female power (Johnson, 2009).

[iii] Also see Eck, 1985 and Babb, 1981 for a discussion on the terms used to describe *darshan* as well as the tactile nature of it.

[iv] For a more detailed account of politics in India, particularly the rise of the Hindu nationalist movement see Jaffrelot 1993; as well as Bhatt 2001 and 2004.

[v] This was followed by the Conservatives win in the 2015 UK general election and the vote to leave the EU in 2016. Also the Republicans winning the 2016 American general election; as well as right wing parties winning elections in Italy, Sweden, Turkey and Brazil, to name but a few.

[vi] RSS branches are known as *shakhas*

[vii] The Swaminarayan movement was founded by Sahajanand Swami, also known as Neelkanth, in the nineteenth century. The movement took hold in Gujarat and many Gujaratis became members and followers. As many Gujaratis migrated to East Africa and the UK the Swaminarayan form of Hinduism was also taken. The movement emphasise 'social work in cities and villages, monotheism rather than idolatrous polytheism and superstition, and to counter the Christian missionaries he structured the sect into dioceses' (Jaffrelot and Therwath, 2007:285).

[viii] Although I use the term looking for the characterisations in this thesis there is still a grammatical need to use terms such as viewing and watching.

[ix] VCR is a video cassette recorder.

[x] Thussu 2005 discusses the expansion of Indian television networks to UK and US markets.

[xi] This means they are mostly devoted to the God Vishnu and his avatars; who include Rama and Krishna.

[xii] In many southern Indian states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Hindus celebrate New Year in March or April. Their celebrations begin on the first day of the month *Chaitra*; while Gujarati's celebrate it on the first day of *Kartak* which is based on the *Bikrami* calendar.

[xiii] Walker Connor's defined diaspora as a 'segment of a people living outside the homeland' (in Safran, 1991:83).

[xiv] The Asian Programmes Unit based at Pebble Mill in Birmingham produced programmes that showed newly arrived migrants elements of British life. It was initially called *Apna Hi Ghar Samajhiye* (*Make Yourself at Home*, 1965 – 1968, BBC) (Hundel, 2009) and it was the first non-English/Welsh language programme the BBC broadcast. *Apna Hi Ghar Samajhiye* was followed by *Nayi Zindagi Naya Jeevan* (*New Life, New World*, BBC) in 1968.

[xv] Endogamous meaning to marry within specific groups such as within a caste/jati.

[xvi] *Biradari*, which means brotherhood, is much more associated with Islamic communities and cultures (Dhanda el al. 2014).

[xvii] In much of the feminist film critique of the 1970s and 1980s there was the implied understanding that not only was the looking associated with men but specifically white western men. The debates around female spectatorship also privileged the look of white, largely middle-class women from North American & Western European. In her book *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (1997) E. Ann Kaplan attempts to respond to the criticism of feminist film theory of the 1970s and 1980s that it neglected to address questions of race and ethnicity (Kaplan, 1997: xi). Still focusing on a psychoanalytical approach, Kaplan discusses the concept of the imperial gaze, a gaze which white people use to look at people of colour and different ethnicities. This is still very much a gaze of white privilege, but it is open to women as well as men. Kaplan argues that this is the position of Hollywood film, particularly in narratives that revolved around travelling. It is whilst abroad that the protagonist looks upon the local people through the imperial gaze. This is not a form of looking found in American films set in America. Kaplan asks '"can the subaltern look?" and how does the subaltern look?' (Kaplan, 1997:4). In order to answer the questions, Kaplan examines films made by seven women filmmakers, four from different ethnic backgrounds, in this instance African American, Indian, Vietnamese and Chinese backgrounds. The remaining filmmakers who are white, one from France and two from the US, are investigated to explore how the imperial gaze is constructed in their films. Kaplan concludes that the films she examined do reverse the gaze, but it is not straightforward. There are different ways to dominate the gaze of the white male. For example, through the work of Balvinder Dhenjan, the gaze of the Indian male is turned onto white American women. While in the work of Tracy Moffat (particularly *Nice Coloured Girls*, (1987)) the look is not only resisting but also 'it puts the project of gazing squarely in the position of the aboriginal female protagonists (Kaplan, 1997:295). However, Kaplan acknowledges that these different looking positions represented in the films are not on an equal footing with the looks of white characters. Kaplan argues 'reversing the gaze is not enough (1999:299). The power struggle of objectification remains.

[xviii] Chromolithography is a practice of lithography printing which uses multiple colours and layers to create intricate prints

[xix] It should be noted that these positions are only assumed during darshanic moments or scenes not throughout the entire film.

[xx] I do not have the space in the body of the thesis, but it should be highlighted that another form of negotiated and resistive reading of popular Hindi language films is offered by Gayatri Gopinath (2000, 2005 and 2005a). Gopinath argued that there are multiple viewing positions an audience member can take up whilst watching popular Hindi language films. For example, a film such as the 2004 film *Kal Ho Nah Ho* (*What if Tomorrow Never Comes?*) can be read

through a diasporic queer perspective. This negotiated reading, Gopinath argued, gives audience members of the diaspora who identify as being part of the LGBTQ + community.

[xxi] An Arabic term that stems from Islamic discourse to refer 'to the eye contact of lovers, especially the first sight that arouses passion' (Lutgendorf, 2006:232). There can also be a negative implication of this kind of look through expressions such as *kali nazar* (black look) and *buri nazar* (evil look). Lutgendorf (2006:232) suggested that these forms of *nazar* 'are associated with powerful and proscribed desires— especially lust, envy, or covetousness.' Thus, implying these forms of desire are bad and should not be pursued.

[xxii] The Ramlila refers to a dramatic or theatrical production of the Ramayana. They can be often seen being performed by travelling theatre troops moving from village to village or town to town. A *katha* is the narration of a story by a *kathavacak* (a story teller/reciter). The Kathavacak is often invited by townspeople to tell a story, normally a devotional story of a sant or a recital of one of the mythologicals (Lutgendorf, 1995: 329).

[xxiii] The work of Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy has explored Turkish communities in London and their use of television. Their study found that the migrant Turkish community, like the Indian diaspora, has created a diasporic or in this case a migrant imaginary of what the homeland is like. 'The banality of the 'here and now' provides the stimulus for nostalgic dreams and fantasies about the 'there and then' (Aksoy and Robins 2003:95). In other words, diasporic communities, or migrant communities think about and see the homeland from a nostalgic perspective. What television does, at least for the migrant Turkish community, is bring a view of Turkey that is the opposite of these nostalgic fantasies, 'television brings the ordinary, banal reality of Turkish life to the migrants living in London… we might say, then, that transnational Turkish television is an agent of cultural de-mythologisation' (Aksoy and Robins 2003:95). Aksoy and Robins continue to move away from Mishra's assumption that the first generation of the diaspora simply holds nostalgic fantasies about the homeland. Instead, there is a further suggestion here that the relationship between cultural identity and media consumption is complex and needs to be investigated further which this study does. However, contemporary Indian transnational media as discussed by Moorti and Dudrah is more complex and caters for multiple generations within the diaspora. The different generations, namely the second and third generation, see the homeland differently compared to those of the first generation. In other words, contemporary transnational television from India is not only portraying the nostalgic image of the homeland but also, at the same time a modern India. These findings built on the conclusion of early television audience studies like the seminal work of David Morley (1980). *The 'Nationwide' Audience* research revealed that the decoding process of the text changed depending on the social, cultural, historical and economic background of the audience. Robins and Aksoy work expanded these conclusions to focus on how a migrant (or diasporic) community could negotiate positions between national and transnational spaces (Robins and Aksoy, 2005:14). Robins and Aksoy highlight and try to make sense of the complex processes transnational audiences are going through to allow them to negotiate a position that is both familiar and new. In order to be able to make sense of these complex processes, Robins and Aksoy examine how audiences 'talk about their experiences of the media and think about their strategies of cultural positioning' (Robins and Aksoy, 2005:14). They argue that 'through the process of migration, these groups find themselves in a new space for experience. The migrant audience in this study implemented a number of strategies 'to position themselves in the 'host' community. In other words, the Turkish community tried to integrate into British society and culture (Robins and Aksoy, 2005:33). Robins and Aksoy found that Turkish-speaking migrants in the study negotiate their positions by relating 'something new to what is

already known – what emerges through experiences of comparison' (Robins and Aksoy, 2005:38). (In these studies of how diasporic audiences negotiate their positions in relation to transnational television), the audiences have not been specified in terms of gender.

[xxiv] Middle Easy/ Asia is the category used on the census forms and based on the data tables available through the Office of National Statistics.

[xxv] *Shivratri*, a day to celebrate Lord Shiva, *Ramnavmi* is Rama's birthday and Janmashtamin is Krishna's birthday.

[xxvi] Other festivals that are observed include *Hanuman Jayanti*, a day devoted to the monkey god Hanuman is celebrated by singing 108 *Hanuman Chalisas* (a devotional hymn about Hanuman), and *Tulsi Viveh* celebrates the wedding of Lord Shiva to his wife Paravati as devotees re-enact the wedding. Prominent days for India are also marked and celebrated at the centre.

[xxvii] These channels are a combination of subscription/paid for channels (Star Plus, ZEE TV and &TV) and two subscription free channels (Colors and Rishtey).

[xxviii] Jaffrelot and Therwath argue that these newspapers and a third newspaper, Asian Voice, do add voice to debates that are pertinent to the Hindu nationalist cause at any give time. At the time of writing in 2007 Jaffrelot and Therwath (2007:285) state that the newspapers 'echo the debates concerning the Christian "threat". Recently the Gujarat Samachar published a glossy supplement about the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which included adverts for investment opportunities in the state.

[xxix] The station was broadcast on FM frequency and only available in certain parts of the UK, such as Leicester and London. Jaffrelot and Therwath also argue that the station, similar to the newspapers, spread the same messages.

[xxx] The potential influence of American style set design can also be noted in other contemporary serials that are set and located in apartments or condominiums as opposed to large houses. These tend to have more of a contemporary modern interior aesthetic. For example, the apartment in the comedy serial *Sumit Sambhal Lega* (*Sumit Can Handle It*, 2015 - 2016, Star Plus) was set up in a way that was similar to the apartments found on American sit-coms like *Friends* (1994 - 2004, NBC), *Big Bang Theory* (2007 -, CBS) or *Rules of Engagement* (2007 - 2013, CBS).

[xxxi] A *swayamvara* is where a bride chooses her husband. This can either be through competition where princes and other kings to compete for the honour of marrying the bride or the bride simply chooses.

[xxxii] Kaushalya had to let Rama go as a child so he could be educated and again later when Rama is banished to the forest. Sita must forsakes her marriage for Rama reputations once they return to Ayodhya from the forest and rescuing Sita from Ravan.

[xxxiii] *Lakshman Rekha* is the boundary Rama's brother Lakshman drew around Sita's hut. Before going to find Rama, Lakshman told Sita not to cross this boundary, as within it she will be safe. It is only when she is tricked into crossing it, she is kidnapped by Ravan.

[xxxiv] Divo is an oil lamp used during puja. The vessel can be made from copper, steel or terracotta. The wick is often made from cotton wool and soaked in ghee or vegetable oil.

[xxxv] Draupadi is the wife of the five Pandava brothers whose narrative we follow in the Mahabharata.

[xxxvi] Lakshmibai manages to escape to a nearby village. The king and the British know she is hiding in the village, the British then decide to raze the village to the ground. Believing they have been successful and that Lakshmibai is dead, the British inform the king. No longer able to face life without his wife and child he decides to commit suicide. However, back in the village the audience are shown that Lakshmibai is alive. She escaped the fire with the help of villagers who knew what the British were going to do. After escaping the fire, Lakshmibai gives birth to her son. Soon after giving birth, she rides away from the village with the baby tied to her back and stops her husband from committing suicide. On realising Lakshmibai and his son are alive, they all go to confront the British soldiers.

[xxxvii] See Banaji 2018.

[xxxviii] Television was introduced to India in 1959, with the help of UNESCO (Rao, 2005:132), who began experiments in televisual broadcasting around New Delhi. In the beginning, the programmes were restricted to educational broadcasts in and around the area of the capital (Mitra, 1993:12). For decades, television was seen as an educational tool and nothing more (Butcher, 2003:49), content was heavily controlled by the government of the time, there was no advertising and access to television was very limited. In the 1970s, television became more of a propaganda tool for the government as the state-maintained control over its output. During this time, there was only one channel that was broadcasting across India, namely Doordarshan. It remained this way until the early 1990s when broadcasting laws were relaxed, and deregulation followed. This deregulation of the airwaves and the advancement of technology allowed other television networks to begin broadcasting in India and subsequently across the world.

In the early decades of Indian television, content had a heavy educational undertone; for example, talk shows were used as a means to inform the public about government announcements and initiatives in a new way. From the 1970s onwards more entertainment programming alongside the broadcast of popular Hindi films was scheduled. It was also from this decade that advertising began to appear on the channel, first as stills and then later as moving image adverts. The television programmes were scheduled in three blocks throughout the day. The morning hour consisted mainly of news and public service announcements, this was followed by four hours of educational programmes in the afternoon and then another four to five hours of primetime programming in the evening. At times when there were no broadcasts there would just be white noise or a blank screen. As television expanded, these scheduled blocks expanded to become longer. The schedule changed on Sundays with a longer block of programming to allow people on their days off to watch television in their homes.

Deregulation allowed independent private companies to set up channels and begin broadcasting. International networks and media companies (such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation) also began infiltrating the Indian television market. Three of the largest networks in the early deregulated era of Indian television included ZEE TV (including channels such as ZEE TV and ZEE Cinema), Star TV (including channels such as Star Plus and Star Gold (broadcasts re-runs of classic Hindi language films)) and Sony Entertainment (B4U Movies and

B4U Music (a music channel with latest releases)). In recent years Viacom 18 has also developed a high-profile portfolio of channels including Colors and Rishtey. Viacom 18 is a joint venture between the American media company Viacom and Indian entertainment company Network 18 (Viacom, 2017). As can be seen, by the name of the channels, the new networks developed channels dedicated to specific genres.

To begin with, many of the new channels predominantly broadcast mostly Western programming. However, soon these channels were forced to 'first Indianize, then regionalise and finally localise their programming' (Thussu, 2005:161). In other words, the channels could not fill their schedules with imported content alone; particularly as this content was mainly in English and attracted the English speaking affluent urban middle class (Thussu, 2005).The networks had to produce domestic content in Hindi and other regional languages; and so were able to target mass markets within India. The first private network to make their own content in vernacular languages was ZEE TV.

The private networks follow a similar scheduling pattern to Doordarshan, in that India still has a six-day working week. Therefore, their schedules are the same for six days of the week with a different schedule on Sundays. Serials on channels like Star Plus and Colors are broadcast between five and six days a week, from Monday to Friday or Saturday. New episodes of the serials are broadcast each evening from around 7pm and are in line with the new episodes that are broadcast in India on the same day. These new episodes are then repeated three to four times on the channels they are broadcast on over the next 24-hour period.

America's dominance has influenced the Indian television market, particularly the private networks in terms of flow. The manner in which each programme, advert break, trailers and idents are put together on Indian television mimic American television flow. Most episodes are scheduled for a 30-minute time slot, in which the actual episode of the serial will be approximately 20 minutes and the remaining ten minutes will be taken up by commercials. In the UK, the serial will begin with an announcement of the sponsors of the serial, this is followed by the opening title card and theme tune. There is then a recap of the previous episode, and then the action of the new episode begins. Each episode is often divided into three parts; the first part will normally be the longest lasting about 10 – 15 minutes. An advert break then follows and it lasts approximately three to five minutes. To signal the beginning of the second (and third) a shortened version of the theme tune is played over an intertitle of the serials. The second and third parts of the serial are three to four minutes each. Between the second and third parts of the serial, there will be another advert break of about two to three minutes. The final part of the serial will end with a precap of the episode that will follow either the next day or at the start of the next week. Once the serial has ended, there is another small advert break of two to three minutes before the start of the next serial.

Recaps and precaps are a common feature in Hindi serials. The recaps are shown directly after the opening credits and last about 30 seconds after which the serial cuts to the main action of the new episode. They give the audience a visual and audio reminder of where the previous episode ended and where the next episode is going to pick up from. The precaps give the audience a brief look at the next episode and take up the last 20-25 seconds of the programme. Not only are they used at the end of each episode but also at the end of each part before the advert breaks. These precaps give the audience a brief look at what is coming up after the advert break. Each episode of the serials begins with a recap of the events of the previous episode.

[xxxix] A lakh is 100, 000 in the Indian numbering system. In this reference, the participant is referring to 300,000 rupees (approx. £1166.00).

[xl] This is the channel number through Sky for &TV.

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Appendix 1 - Survey

Section I: General Television Consumption

1., Do you watch television programmes in any format, live broadcast, catch - up/recorded or through streaming websites? *તમે ટેલીવીઝન જુઓ છો?*

Yes *(હા)* ☐ Please move to question 1a *(સવાલ 1a ઉપર જાઓ)*

No *(ના)* ☐ Please move to Section 3. (*ભાગ III (3) ઉપર જાઓ)*

1a., On which format would you say you watched most of your television?
તમે કયા ફોરમાટ માં ટેલીવીઝન જુઓ છો?

Please select one - એક સલેક્ટ કરો

Live Broadcast on a TV Set ટીવી પર આવતા લાઇવ		Recorded, i.e. Sky+, TiVo, VHS રીકોર્ડ કરેલો દા.ત સ્કાય+,	
Live Broadcast via a streaming site, i.e. TV Catch u BBC iPlayer કપ્યુટર પર દા.ત. ટીવી કાચ અપ, બીબીસી આય પ્લચેર		Downloaded કપ્યુટર ડાઉન લોડ કરીને	
Through streaming sites, i.e. Netflix, Amazon Prime. કપ્યુટર સાઇટ દા.ત *નેટફલીક્ષ*		Catch-up websites on laptops, tablets, computers. વેબસાઇટ - લાપટોપ, ટેબલેટ, કે કપ્યુટર પર કાચ અપ	

2., On an average weekday (Monday – Friday), how many hours do you spend watching television on any format?
અઠવાડીયા માં ***(સોમવાર થી સુક્વાર સુધી)*** *કેટલા કલાક તમે ટીવી જુઓ છો?*

Less than 2 hours બે કલાક થી ઓછુ		6 – 8 hours ૬ – ૮ કલાક	
2 – 4 hours ૨ – ૪ કલાક		8 – 12 hours ૮ – ૧૨ કલાક	
4 – 6 hours ૪-૬ કલાક		More than 12 hours બાર કલાક થી વધુ	

2a., On an average weekend (Saturday – Sunday), how many hours do you spend watching television on any format?
શની- રવિવાર *આશરે કે ટલા કલાક તમે ટીવી જુઓ છો?*

Less than 2 hours બે કલાક થી ઓછુ		6 – 8 hours ૬ – ૮ કલાક	
2 – 4 hours		8 – 12 hours	

૨ – ૪ કલાક		૮ – ૧૨ કલાક	
4 – 6 hours ૪-૬ કલાક		More than 12 hours બાર કલાક થી વધુ	

3., At what time of the day do you watch the most television?
દીવસ માં કયા સમયે તમે વધારે ટેલીવીઝન જુઓ છો?

Early Morning (6am – 9am) વહેલું સવારે (૬-૯)		Evening (6pm – 9pm) સાંજ ના સમયે (૬-૯)	
Late Morning (9am – 12noon) મોડી સવારે (૯-૧૨)		Late Evening (9pm – 12 midnight) મોડી સાંજ (૯-૧૨)	
Afternoon (12 noon – 3pm) બપોર ના સમયે (૧૨-૩)		Late Night (after 12 midnight) મોડી રાતે બાર વાગે	
Late Afternoon (3pm – 6pm) મોડી બપોર (૩-૬)		Other time, please specify: બીજા સમયે જોતાં હોતો ચોખવટ કરો:	

4., Do you do any of the following tasks while you watch television?
ટીવી જોતા તમે બીજું કંઈક રે?

Tick all that apply.

Cook a meal *રાસોઈ બનાવતા*		Read a book *બુક વાંચતા*		Cleaning/Dusting *સાફાઇ કરતા*	
Make a snack *નસ્તો બનાવતા*		Read a magazine *મગેજીન વાંચતા*		Do laundry *કપડા ધોતા*	
Eat a meal/ snack *ખાતા કે નસ્તો કરતા*		Read a newspaper *ન્યૂઝપેપર વાંચતા*		Do the ironing *કપડા ને પસી કરતા*	
Do the dishes *વાસણા ધોતા*		Talking on the phone *ટેલીફોન પેરવાત કરતા*		Other domestic chores *બીજુ કાઇ ઘરનુ કામ કરતા*	
Surf the web *ઇંટરનેટ વાપરતા*		Have a skype chat *સ્કયપ પર વાતો કરતા*		Have a bath *સ્નાન કરતા*	
Use Facebook *ફેસબુક વાપરતા*		Homework *ફેસબુક વાપરતા*		Do work *કામ કરતા*	
Coursework *કોસ વર્ક કરતા*		Other (please specify) *બીજુ સ્પષ્ટ કરો*			

5., Do you (or the head of your household) subscribe to any of the following:
તમે કે ઘરના જવાબદાર વ્યકતિ એ નીચે જણાવેલ માંથી લવાજમ ભર્યું છે

Select all that apply

Sky or Sky HD સ્કાઇ		Netflix નેટફ્લીક્ષ		Blinkbox બ્લિંક બોક્સ	
Virgin Media વર્જિન મીડીયા		Love Film Instant લોવ ફિલ્મ ઈન્સ્ટન્ટ		iTunes આય ટ્યૂન્સ	
You View TV (inc. BT TV & Talk Talk TV) યૂ વ્યૂ ટીવી				Amazon Prime આમાઝોન પ્રિમ	
Other બીજુ		*Please specify* સ્પષ્ટ કરો			

6., What kind of programmes do you watch?
કઇ જાતના પોગ્રામ તમે જુઓ છો?

Drama ડ્રામ		**Sports** સ્પોર્ટ્સ		**Entertainment** એનટરટેઇમન્ટ	
Soap Operas સોપ ઓપર		Football ફૂટબોલ		Reality Shows રીએલિટી શો	
Costume Dramas કાસ્ટૂમ ડ્રામ		Cricket ક્રિકિટ		Chat Shows ચૈટ શો	
Crime Dramas ક્રાઇમ ડ્રામ		Motorsport મોટર સ્પોર્ટ		Quiz Shows ક્વિઝ શો	
Other drama please specify બીજુ ડ્રામ સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____		Other sports please specify: બીજુ સ્પોર્ટ સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____		Other entertainment please specify: બીજુ એનટરટેઇમન્ટ સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____	
Comedy કામડી		**Documentary** ડાક્યમેન્ટરી		**Lifestyle** જીવનશૈલી	
Sitcoms સિટકોમ		Science/Nature વિજ્ઞાન/ પ્રકૃતિ		Cookery/Food રસોઈકળા/ ખોરાક	
Satire સૈટાઇઅર		History હિસ્ટરી		Health & Wellbeing હેલ્થ અને કલ્યાણ	
Stand up સ્ટૈન્ડ- અપ		Arts & Culture આર્ટ્સ અને કલ્ચર		Religious ધાર્મિક	
Other comedy please specif બીજુ કામડી સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____		Other factual please specif બીજુ ડાક્યમેન્ટરી સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____		Other lifestyle please specif બીજુ જીવનશૈલી સ્પષ્ટ કરો: _____	
News સમાચાર		**Current Affairs** કરન્ટ અફેર્જ		**Music** મ્યૂઝિક	
Children's' Television બાળકોની ટેલિવિઝન		**Other, please specify:** બીજુ, સ્પષ્ટ કરો:			

7., How much of the television you watch would you say (approximately) was made in any of the following countries:
બીજા દેશોમાં બનાવેના પ્રોગ્રામ તમે કેટલું જુઓ છો?

Please place a tick for each country *(બીજાનીચે આપેલા દેશોમાં એક ટિક મારો)*

	All of it *આખુ*	**Most of it** *ઘણા ભાગે*	**Half of it** *અડધું*	**Some of** *અમુંક*	**None at all** *કાંઇ નહી*
England/Britain – *ઇંગ્લન્ડ/બ્રિટન*					
India - *ભારત*					
America - *અમેરિકા*					
Australia - *ઓસ્ટ્રેલિયા*					
Ireland - *આયર્લેન્ડ*					
Other, please specify: *બીજુ સ્પષ્ટ કરો:* _____					

8., Do you have a subscription to any of the following Indian cable/satellite channels?
નીચે આપેલા ચાનલોમાંથી તમે ક્યા ચાનલોનું લવાજમ લીધું છે?

Aastha આસ્થા		**MATV National** *મઅટીવી નૈશનલ*		**Star One** *સ્ટાર વન*	
ARY Digital *એરી ડિજિટલ*		**NTV** *નટીવી*		**Star Plus** સ્ટાર પ્લસ	
ARY News *એરી સમાચાર*		**Sony Entertainment Television Asia** *સોની એન્ટરટેઇનમેન્ટ*		**Star Sport** *સ્ટાર સ્પોર્ટ*	
B4U Movies *બી4ઉ મૂવીજ઼*		**Star Gold** *સ્ટાર ગોલ્ડ*		**ZEE Cinema** *ઝી ચિનેમ*	
B4U Music *બી4ઉ મ્યૂજ઼िક*		**Star Life OK** *સ્ટાર લાઈફ ઓકે*		**ZEE TV** *ઝી ટીવી*	
Other, please specify: *બીજુ સ્પષ્ટ કરો:*					

Section II: Watching Indian Television

If you have watched any television programmes from any Indian television channels in the last seven (7) days please answer the questions in this section.
છેલ્લા સાત (૭) દીવસમાં તમે ઇન્ડીયન ટેલીવીઝન પ્રોગ્રમ જોયો હોય તો આ નીચેના સવાલ નો જવાબ આપો.

If you have not please move onto Section III. *(નહીં જોયો હોય તો ભાગ III (3) ઉપર જાઓ)*

9., In the last seven (7) days did you watch any Indian serials/dramas?
છેલ્લા સાત દીવસમાં તમે ઇન્ડીયન સીરીયલ કે ડ્રામ જોયો છે?

Yes *(હા)* ☐ Please move onto question **9a**. (*સવાલ **9a** ઉપર જાઓ)*

No *(ના)* ☐ Please move onto question **10**. (*સવાલ **10** ઉપર જાઓ)*

9a., Please list the names of the Indian serials/dramas you watched:
તમે જોયેલા ઇન્ડીયન સીરીયલ કે ડ્રામ ના નામ લખો

_____ _____ _____

10., In the last seven (7) days did you watch any Indian/Hindu religious programmes?
છેલ્લા સાત દીવસમાં તમે ઇન્ડીયન/હિન્દુ ધર્મીક પ્રોગ્રામ જોયો છે?

Yes *(હા)* ☐ Please move onto question **10a**. (*સવાલ **10a** ઉપર જાઓ)*

No *(ના)* ☐ Please move onto question **11**. (*સવાલ **11** ઉપર જાઓ)*

10a., Please list the names of the Indian/Hindu religious programmes you watched:
તમે જોયેલા ઇન્ડીયન/હિન્દુ ધર્મીક પ્રોગ્રામનાં નામ લખો:

_____ _____ _____

11., In the last seven (7) days did you watch any Indian entertainment programmes?
છેલ્લા સાત દીવસમાં તમે કોઇ ઈન્ડીયન એનટરટેઇમન્ટ પ્રોગ્રામ જોયો છે?

Yes *(હા)* ☐ Please move onto question **11a**. (*સવાલ **11a** ઉપર જાઓ)*

No *(ના)* ☐ Please move onto question **12**. (*સવાલ **12** ઉપર જાઓ)*

11a., Please list the names of the Indian entertainment programmes you watched:
તમે જોયેલા ઈન્ડીયન એનટરટેઇમન્ટ પ્રોગ્રામના નામ લખો:

_____ _____ _____

12., Are there any other kinds of Indian programmes you have watched in the last seven (7) days that have not been listed?
છેલ્લા સાત દીવસમાં તમે કોઇ બીજા ઈન્ડીયન પ્રોગ્રામ જોયો છે? જે અહીં નહી આપ્યા?

Yes *(હા)* ☐ Please move onto question **12a**. (*સવાલ **12a** ઉપર જાઓ)*

No *(ના)* ☐ Please move onto Section III. (*ભાગ III (3) ઉપર જાઓ)*

12a., Please list the kind of programmes you watched and their names:
તમે જે જુઓ છો તેના નામ લખો

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____. _____

_____. _____

SECTION III: Your Profile

13., Age *(તમારી ઊમર)* _____ Prefer not to say *(તમારે ન કહેવું હોય તો)* ☐

14., Town/City & country of birth *(ગામ/શહેરમાં જન્મ)*

_____ Prefer not to say *(તમારે ન કહેવું હોય તો)* ☐

14a., If your country of birth was not in the UK please can you tell us when you arrived in the UK and why? *(તમારો જન્મ U.Kમાં ન થયો હોય તો તમે U.K.માં ક્યરે અને કેમ આવ્યા તે જણાવશો?)*

Prefer not to say *(તમારે ન કહેવું હોય તો)*

15., Current living arrangements *હાલમાંરહેવાની સગવડ*

Alone *એકલા રહો છો*	
With spouse *તમારા પતિ- પત્ની*	
Live with your family (spouse & children) *તમારા કુટુંબ સાથે રહો છો*	
Live with parents *તમારા વાલીઓ સાથે રહો છો*	
Live with friends *તમારા મીત્ર સાથે રહો છો*	
Prefer not to say *તમારે ન કહેવું હોય તો*	

16., Highest level of education *તમારો વિદ્યાઅભ્યાસ*

No qualifications *કોઇ ક્વાલફકૈશન્જ નથી*		Degree (BA, BSc) *ડિગ્રી (બીએ બીસસી)*	
O levels/CSEs/GCSEs/Foundation Diplomas *ઓ લેવલ - જી.સી.સ.ઇ.*		Postgraduate Certificates/Diplomas *પોસ્ટ્ગ્રૈજૂઇટ સર્ટિફિકટ/ ડિપ્લોમ*	
AS levels/Higher Diplomas *એસ લેવલ/હાઇઅર ડિપ્લોમ*		Higher Degree (MA, MSc, MRes, MEng, MPhil, PhD) *હા ઇયર ડિગ્રી*	
Apprenticeship *અપ્રેન્ટસ્શિપ*		Professional Qualifications (nursing, accountancy) *પ્રફેશનલ ક્વાલફકૈશન્જ*	
A level/Advanced Diplomas		Prefer not to say	

એ લેવલ/ અડ્વૈન્સ્ટ ડિપ્લોમ		તમારે ન કહેવું હોય તો	

17., Employment status નોકરી / ધંધો

Employed કામ કરો છો	
Self-employed જાતે ધંધો કરું છું	
Unemployed કામ નથી કરતા	
Retired નિવૃત્ત છો	
Student વિદ્યાર્થી છો	
None of the above, please specify: _____ ઉપર જણાવેલ માંથી એકે નહી હોય અને બીજુ કાંઇ કરતાં હોતો સ્પષ્ટ કરો	
Prefer not to say જણાવવું નથી	

Thank you very much for completing the survey.

ઘણો આભાર

Appendix 2 - Information Sheet: Survey

The Consumption of Television by Gujarati-speaking Hindu Indian Diasporic women in Lancashire.

Who is conducting the research?

The research is being conducted by Mita Lad from the Department of Media at Edge Hill University for use in her PhD thesis.

Why are we doing this study?

The aim of this survey is to gain as much information as possible about what you watch on television, how you watch television and why you watch the programmes you do.

What does the study involve?

This study is voluntary and you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire about your television viewing preferences and habits. The questionnaire should take approximately 12-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is available in English or Gujarati.

What personal information will I be required to provide?

On the first page, we will be asking you to indicate your consent to participate in the survey. After this we all be asking you for some demographic information (for example age, gender, etc.). You are free to not answer any items that you do not wish to.

Confidentiality

All information provided will be kept confidential; your details will never be linked to your answer and it will not be possible to identify individual responses. The data is aggregated and anonymised. All data will be stored in a locked office in a secure locker. The data will be retained for a period of five years following the completion of the project and the publication of any articles resulting from this work. After this time, the data will be destroyed. No information reported will be directly attributed to you and it will not be possible to identify individual respondents.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

Advantages:

The data and information collected from the questionnaires will be analysed and written into a PhD thesis. The data gathered will help researchers and media scholars to better understand the viewing preferences and habits of Indian women living in the U.K. Participants who complete a questionnaire will also be placed in a prize draw for a £25 Marks and Spencer's gift card.

Disadvantages
There are no anticipated disadvantages, harm, or risks for participating in the questionnaire. If any concerns arise you may contact the principle researcher who can direct you to relevant links for information and advice.

What are my rights as a participant?

If you do decide to take part in the research you will have the right to withdraw at any point; you do not need to provide a reason and there will be no penalty. You will also have the right to withdraw your data at any time up to a period of two (2) weeks after you have completed the questionnaire. If you do decide to withdraw then your data and details will be removed and destroyed.

Appendix 3 – The Participants & their living spaces

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a 62-year-old retired office clerk who lives with her husband in a three-bedroom semi-detached house not far from Preston city centre. Participant 1 was born in Nairobi, Kenya but moved to Gujarat in India for five years before moving to the UK. She arrived in Preston as a teenager in the late 1960s with her parents and siblings. She returned to India in the mid-1970s to get married after which her husband moved to Preston as well. Participant 1 had three adult children, one of whom passed away a few years ago, while her remaining children live away from home. The participant is regular visitor to the local Hindu temple, attending almost on a daily basis during the week. In terms of Hindi serials, Participant 1 usually records the Indian serials on the Sky + box and then watches them later in the evening after 10pm. There is only one Sky+ box in the house, and it is located in the lounge, which is on the ground floor at the front of the house. Her husband often joins her for a short period of time to watch the serials before going to bed.

Participant 1 lives in a 1930s/1940s semi-detached three-bedroomed house. The lounge is located on the ground floor of the building and is at the front of the house. From the double-glazed front door, you enter a small porch and into a secondary front door (this was the original front door to the property – the porch was open). From the front door, you are led into a spacious hallway. In the hallway there are three doors, two on the left-hand side and one on the right. The stairs leading up to the first floor is on the right-hand side. The door to the right is under the stairs and leads to a small pantry/storage room. The first door on the left leads to the lounge and the second door on the left leads to an open plan kitchen and dining room.

The door to the lounge opens to the right and as you enter there is a two-seater dark red/burgundy leather sofa directly in front of you running along the adjacent wall. The sofa sits in front of a radiator and in the far corner there is an alcove that houses a glass fronted cabinet. The cabinet is full of photos of family, small ornaments of Hindu deities as well as general knickknacks. Hanging on this wall there is a framed print of a painting that depicts the Hindu deities Radha and Krishna. There are also two wall lights on either side of the picture. Behind the door there is three-seater leather sofa (part of the same suite) behind the door. On the wall above the sofa there are three photos, two framed portraits of Participant 1 and her husband and one frame photo of her children. There is a canvas printed photo of one of her

sons and his wife on their wedding day. In the far corner, next to the three-seater sofa is a corner dresser. The dresser has a glass fronted door on the top half and a solid wooden door on the bottom half. The dresser is filled with more ornaments like glass and ceramic figures and vases as well as some photos of Participant 1 and her family. The far end of the room is dominated by a large bay window that looks out onto the street in front of the house. In the bay of the window there is another two-seater dark red/burgundy sofa (part of the same suite). In front of the sofa is a wooden coffee table that is covered in woollen woven tablecloth/blanket.

In the corner, diagonally opposite from the door there is a large television on a stand – underneath the television set – in the stand there is a Sky+ box, a DVD player and a video recorder/player. The television set and stand is placed slightly back into the alcove of the wall. There is a chimney breast in the middle of the opposite wall. This has a gas fire in the middle – surrounded by a wooden fireplace and mantle. Along the mantle there are photos of family members, small candles and carriage clock. The walls are painted a pale blue green colour. The furniture is dark in contrast – the carpet is a green with a small repetitive diamond pattern on it. In the middle of the ceiling there is a light fitting which also has a fan attached to it.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is a 63-year old housewife who lives with her husband and adult son in a three-bedroomed semi-detached house close to Preston city centre. She was born in Nairobi, Kenya and moved to the UK with her parents and siblings. On her arrival into the UK, Participant 2 initially lived in Leicester. Participant 2 only moved to Preston after her wedding. Participant 2 has two adult children, a daughter who is married and lives elsewhere and her son. Participant 2 mainly watches Indian language television. She watches serials on Star Plus as they are being broadcast. She watches them in her lounge which is located on the ground floor at the front of the house. She watches television late at night, from approximately after 9.30/10p.m., during the week. This is normally after she has come home from the local temple, which she visits almost on a daily basis (during the week) with her husband. Participant 2 normally watches the serials by herself while she busies herself with an activity.

The participant lives in a 1930s/1940s semi-detached house. The lounge is located on the ground floor of the building and is at the front of the house. From the double glazed front door, you enter a small porch and into a secondary front door (this was the original front door to the

property – the porch was open, this is similar to the home of Participant 1). From the secondary front door, it leads into a small hallway. On the left-hand side, there are the stairs leading up to the first floor, under the stairs as you go towards the back of the house is a door that leads into the kitchen. On the right-hand side of the hallway there are two doors – one leading to a room at the back of the house (which was closed when I arrived). The other leading to the lounge which was open.

The door to the lounge opens to the right and as you enter there is a two-seater leather sofa directly in front of you running along the wall perpendicular to the left. In the opposite corner, on the other side of the sofa there is an ornament of the Hindu deity Shiva as the Nataraja – this is his incarnation of the Lord of the Dance. The ornament is surrounded by various other items. Behind the door there is three-seater leather sofa, in front of which is a dark wooden coffee table. On the wall opposite, the three-seater sofa, there is chimney breast and a mantel piece and a gas fire heater. The far side of the room is dominated by a large bay window – the curtains are drawn during the observations. There is a pouf in the middle of the bay window next to which in the left-hand corner of the room is a large flat screen television on a television stand. The television stand also has a Sky box and what looks like a DVD player. The lounge is very crowded, the sofas and the coffee table take up quite a lot of room. There are pictures of children on the walls and in frames around the room. The room is brightly lit by a ceiling light in the middle of the room.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is retired and lives in a three-bedroomed terraced house with her husband. She is 72 years old and moved to the UK, from Uganda, in the 1970's with her husband and children. She was born in Gujarat, India and moved to Uganda after her wedding. She first arrived in London but settled in Preston. Participant 3 has three adult sons all living elsewhere. She visits the local temple on most weekdays during the day. Participant 3 watches television in her lounge, where she has access to Sky. The majority of serials are watched as they are being broadcast, but Participant 3 does record some programmes to watch at other times. She normally watches the serials during prime time, from about 7 p.m. to about 10 p.m. each night during the week. She is often joined by her husband. The lounge is located on the ground floor at the front of the house.

Participant 3 lives in a mid-terraced three-bedroom house. The front door is a PVC double glazed door; to the left-hand side of the door is a large double-glazed window. As you enter the house you step into a small porch, which leads into a long thin hallway. The porch and the hallway are divided by a frosted glass door. Directly in front – opposite the glass door - there are stairs leadings to the first floor, along the left-hand side of the hall way are two doors. The first (closet to the front of the house) leads to the lounge, the second (towards the back of the house) leads to the dining room and the kitchen beyond.

As you walk into the lounge there is a two-seater white leather sofa in front of you. On a TV stand on the other side of the sofa is a large flat screen TV. The television is on a stand and underneath it is a Sky set top box and a DVD player. The door to the lounge opens to the left and behind the door is a three-seater white leather sofa. On the opposite wall to the three-seater sofa there is a chimney breast on the centre and two alcoves on either side. The television stand is set slightly into the alcove opposite the door. There is gas fireplace in the middle of the chimney breast, and it is surrounded by a mantelpiece. On the far wall – which is the front of the house - there is a window, it looks out directly onto the street but during the observations the curtains are drawn. Underneath the window is another sofa, part of the same suite as the other sofas. In the middle of the room is a coffee table covered with a lace tablecloth. The room is brightly lit from one light fixture in the middle of the ceiling.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is 52 years old and works part time. She lives in a detached house located just south of the river Ribble, with her husband and adult son. She was born and brought up in Gujarat, India. Participant 4 arrived in the UK from Gujarat after she married her husband in the early 1980s. The participant is also a regular visitor to the temple but mostly attends on a weekly basis as opposed to on a daily basis. She watches television from about 7.30pm onwards after she has had her dinner and tidied up. She normally watches television until about 9.30pm/10pm during the week. Participant 4 only has access to one Sky box in her lounge, which is a large room on the ground floor. She is often joined by her husband and /or son while watching television.

Participant 4 lives in large detached house with her husband and adult son. The front door opens into a large hallway with several doors leading off it to several rooms such as a study, kitchen and dining room. The stair case is in the middle of the hallway opposite large glass

double doors. The doors open into the middle of a large lounge. As you walk in on the left-hand side behind the door there is a two-seater leather sofa. Opposite the sofa is chair/chaise longue style chair. Between the two is a coffee table covered in a large lace table cloth. To the far left there is a bay window looking out onto the front garden and the street at the front of the house. Underneath the window is a television on a stand that houses the Sky Box. Opposite the television there are two leather arm chairs – these are positioned facing the television in the middle of the room just past the door to the lounge. On the wall, directly opposite the door there is a fire place and a mantel. The walls are painted a cream/magnolia colour and there is a light fitting on the ceiling above the coffee table and another towards the back of the room. On the wall opposite the sofa there are large photos of the Participant and her family. Some of these are framed, some are printed onto canvas. The front half of the room, where the observation took place, was lit by the main source of light in the middle of the ceiling.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is 50 years old and lives in a three-bed room semi-detached house close to Preston city centre with her teenage daughter. She was born in India and arrived in the UK after she was married in the mid-1980s. Participant 5 was widowed a few years ago and has one child, her daughter. Similar to Participant 4, Participant 5 visits the local temple on weekly basis. Participant 5 normally watches television as it is being broadcast. She mainly watches television from about 7pm onwards until about 10pm but occasionally will watch television in the mornings or afternoons. There is only one television in the house; this is located in the lounge and has a Sky box connected to it. Participant 5 often watches the serials with her daughter.

Participant 5 lives with her daughter in a modern three-bedroom house. You enter the house through an extended porch into a small hall which has the stairs leading to the first floor in front of you and a door on the right leading to the lounge. The lounge is open plan and leads to the dining room area and a conservatory towards the back of the house. To the left of the dining room there is a door that leads to the kitchen. As you walk into the lounge, on the right-hand side there is a window looking out into the front garden and the street. The lounge has two leather or leather effect black sofas in it. Below the window is a two-seater sofa. On the far corner is the television on a television stand. Along the opposite wall there is a fireplace and a set of small coffee tables. From the door to the lounge – on the left hand side is the

other sofa. In the archway – that separates the dining room and the lounge – there is a leather desk chair. There is a small fold out table in front of the sofa – on which are bits of paper, pens and other miscellaneous items. The walls are covered with pictures of Hindu deities and there are photographs of family members, Participants 5's daughter as a young girl, her husband (who has passed away) and other members of the family who have also passed away. Similarly, to other participants the room is brightly lit from the main light source in the middle of the ceiling.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is over the age of 50 and lives in a three-bed room terraced house with her husband. She works part time from home. Participant 6 was born in Gujarat, India and arrived in the UK after she married her husband in the mid-1980s. She has two adult children, a son and a daughter, both of whom live elsewhere. Similarly, to Participant 3, Participant 6 visits the local temple on an almost daily basis during the week. Participant 6 normally watches television in her lounge from about 7pm onwards each evening. The lounge is on the ground floor and at the front of the house. She watches television as it is being broadcast and often watches television with her husband.

Participant 6 lives in a three-bedroomed terrace house with her husband. As you walk into the front door there is a small porch before another door leads directly into the lounge. The lounge is the full width of the house. Directly in front of the door into the lounge there is a three-seater sofa and in the far corner there is a small shelving unit with a lamp and telephone on it. On the opposite wall to the door, running perpendicular to the walls with the shelving unit, there is a door that leads into the kitchen. Next to the door is another three-seater sofa. Along the far-left hand wall there is a chimney breast and two alcoves. On the chimney breast close to the ground is a small gas fire place. Above this is a plasma screen television hung on the wall with brackets. In the alcove to the left of the chimney breast there are some built in cupboards. The top shelf of the cupboard is open and it houses a number of small *murtis*, prints of Hindu deities and some of the required accessories for conducting a *puja*, including incense sticks, a *divo*, a bell and red sandalwood powder. On the wall running long the left-hand side of the room, from the front door to the alcove with the home shrine, is another three-seater sofa. Above the sofa is a large window, the only source of natural light for the room. In the alcove on the right-hand side of the chimney breast there is also some more built

in cupboards. In the middle of the room there is a long dark wood coffee table with a diamond shaped laced tablecloth place on top.